



PlayStation®2



PlayStation®Portable

PLAYSTATION®3

# PlayStation®

Official Magazine - Australia

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# GRAN TURISMO 5

The next generation of racing is here!

**76 PS3  
REVIEWS!**Unreal Tournament 3  
Burnout Paradise  
Lost Planet  
Rock Band  
+ heaps more!**4  
FREE  
POSTERS!****PS3'S 1<sup>ST</sup>  
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ISSUE 14 MARCH 2008

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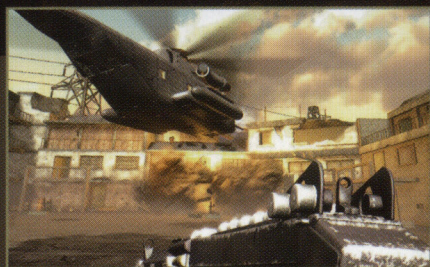
# CONFLICT

## DENIED OPS

WHILE HE'S  
COVERING  
THE ANGLES

“IT’S MIGHTILY IMPRESSIVE”

GAMES RADAR



RUTHLESS REAL WORLD ACTION RELENTLESS CO-OP TACTICS RECKLESS DESTRUCTION

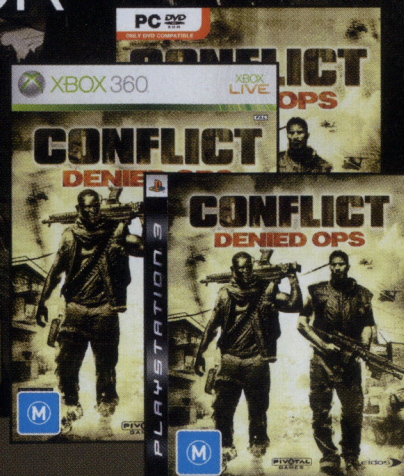




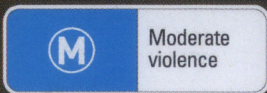
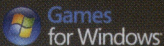
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ATARI



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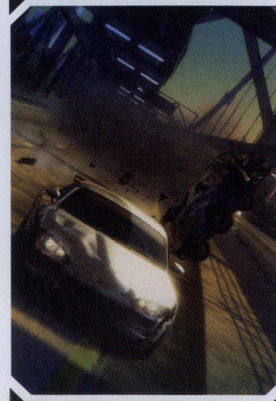
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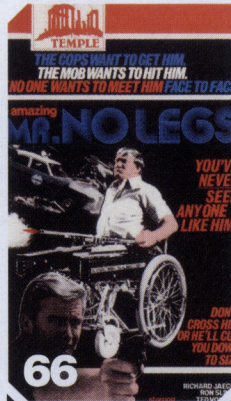


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**"I was thinking of getting my PS3 a strip-o-gram, by [a] sexy new laptop..."**

Picking the right birthday gift is always tricky. First I was thinking of getting my PS3 a strip-o-gram, done by one of those sexy new compatible laptops he can stick his detachable harddrive in. Or maybe I should string up an Xbox 360 in the backyard and let my PS3 beat it with a stick until its red ring of death lights up. Knowing the Xbox 360 though, you probably wouldn't even have to hit it once before its red ring lit up. Viva piñata, bitch.

Sure my PS3 would have a great time with either of these gifts but what about me? I'm all for being generous and all that crap but you've got to get something back... right? Anybody?

Then I figured out the perfect way to give the birthday cake and eat it too. I'll celebrate my PS3's first birthday with three months of awesome! Unfortunately I'm not talking about the same 'three months of awesome' party with the February, March and April Playmates Hugh Hefner had (the lucky sonofabitch). I'm talking about the nearly as awesome three months we've got coming up with February's *Burnout Paradise*, March's *Rock Band* (come on EA, lock the date in) and April's *Grand Theft Auto IV*. Happy Birthday PS3, let the good times roll.

**NARAYAN PATTISON, Editor**

*Narayan Pattison*

PS3 online: **The\_Duude**

## Ideal birthday party plans...

### LUKE REILLY

Sigh... I gave up partying long ago. This hat? It's a fake, a clever ruse by Phill to make me look like I'm ready to rock. The handsome smile? Fake too. Photoshop trickery, most likely. Why, you ask? I can't say, it's just too painful...

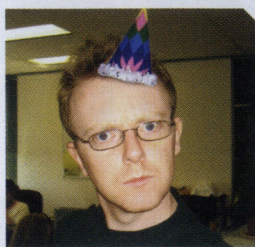
Online: **Capt\_Flashheart**



### MARK SERRELS

Aw shucks... I don't know. It must involve kebabs, a big ass cake shaped like a cock and balls, and some form of gyrating semi-naked female company. Everyone has to dress like Oompa Loompas, and laugh at my jokes.

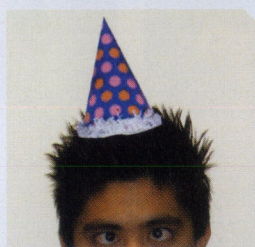
Online: **Serrels**



### PHILLIP JORGE

Call me a traditionalist but I just can't see how anyone could go past a good old fashioned night of birthday fun with dozens of stunners mud wrestling at Hooters. Please God don't let Trish read this.

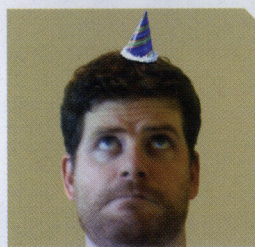
Online: **PhilLipO**



### ADAM MATHEW

My dream party would feature a performance by the Wiggles, getting hammered with said Wiggles, ploughing the big red car through a mall and shaving Dorothy the dinosaur's eyebrows off.

Online: **YourmumsAWESOME**



### ANTHONY O'CONNOR

Partying with my Goth friends where we all have a 'group sook' about how I'm one year closer to the yawning chasm that is... death. Nah, just kidding. I like a frosty beer and perhaps a goodly woman.

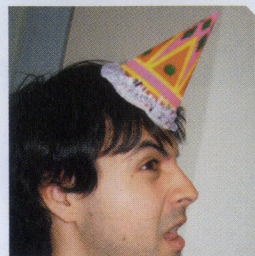
Online: **stoxy242**



### JAMES ELLIS

I'd rip off the party from Billy Madison and find a mansion me and my buddies could run riot in. Rubber duckies in the pool, a massive game of slip n' slide, and making out with a hot teacher.

Online: **gtfaster49**



**PlayStation®**  
Official Magazine - Australia

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**SHOUT OUTS:** Tex :: Vispi :: Whiplash  
the Cowboy Monkey :: Heath Ledger  
:: Nicole 'Knocked Up' Reilly and  
Luke's unborn... son? :: Phill 'n'  
Trish's new place :: \$700 scotch



# Smash it up with SEGA's Superstars!

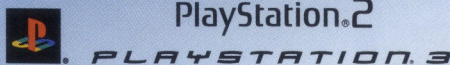


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# SCREENSHOT

OF THE MONTH





**Metal Gear Solid 4:** Daddy's home. Well, on his way home at least, or just finished work and heading for a couple of drinks before stumbling in drunk, belligerent and ready for love. Yep, It got weird. Bottom line: MGS4 = awesome.





Gaming's latest and greatest...

# BUZZ

**Sony claims victory** at CES, Resistance 2 first details and screens, World of Warcraft to hit consoles, Darth Vader comes to Soul Calibur 4, and much, much more...

## CES 2008

**T**he Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is a veritable maelstrom of cutting edge technology. The VCR, the NES, the DVD, and more recently the HDTV, all made their debut at CES, and this years show didn't disappoint.

Panasonic wheeled out an unnecessarily huge 150" Plasma TV with a resolution almost four times that of your standard 1080p HDTV, USB3 was unveiled, in between all manner of iPod rip offs and insane new mobile phones.

But of course, we don't care all that much about technology we won't be able to afford for the next decade or so. No, dear reader, we care about the games, the glorious games!

Sony's presence at CES was particularly strong this year, with Blu-ray

putting the final nails in HD-DVD's coffin (see right) and finally announcing SKYPE functions for the PSP (see below).

As far as games themselves go *LittleBigPlanet* wowed onlookers with more demonstrations of its user created content mayhem, and *Metal Gear Solid 4* once again caused grown men to shed tears of homoerotic joy over what will now surely become a major candidate for 'Game of Forever'.

First *LittleBigPlanet*, which is now scheduled for a September release. As always, this game remains impossible to describe: demos were shown using the remarkably simple map design tools as one of the game's audio designers, with no map experience whatsoever, designed a small map and played through it.

This demo, although interesting, failed to show much in the way of actual gameplay: we're itching to see a huge scale level utilising the awesome *LBP* physics engine.

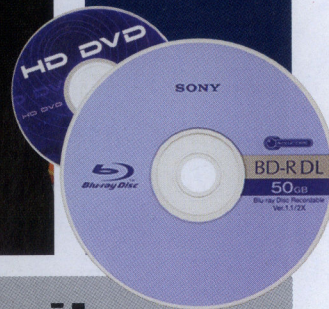
As for *Metal Gear Solid 4*, onlookers at CES were invited to play through a demo, similar to the one available on the PSN a while back. This resulted in glut of footage that proved two things, one: Hideo Kojima is a direct descendant of Jesus Christ himself, and two: tech geeks can't play video games to save their life. Despite this, *MGS4* looked as amazing as ever, and our only worry is the fear that this inevitable masterpiece of game design won't be able to withstand the tsunami of hype it has garnered thus far.

## TRUE BLU

While Blu-ray has consistently had the upper hand in the format war between HD-DVD, a megaton announcement by Warner Brothers pretty much dealt a fatal blow to Toshiba's fledgling disc format.

Warner Brothers announced a Blu-ray exclusivity deal, and sister studio New Line Cinema followed suit. This leaves only Paramount and Universal supporting HD-DVD, with every other studio backing Blu-ray.

This announcement leaves most analysts in no doubt that Blu-ray will be the inevitable victor of the format 'wars' – it was telling that in the wake of Warner Brothers announcement the HD-DVD CES conference was cancelled.



## The Skype's the limit...

**Skype**, the online service that allows you to make free phone calls to other Skype users has been recently announced for the PSP. The catch? It will only work on the newly released PSP-2000, due to memory issues.

This puts an end to the PSP phone rumours (since Skype can also be used to make phone calls to other mobile and land lines – though not for free) and also opens the PlayStation Portable up to yet another avenue in terms

of multimedia usage.

This, combined with the PSP's new GPS system and Go! Messenger application, could result in the PSP becoming the handheld gadget of choice for tech-heads worldwide.



# VIVA LA RESISTANCE!

**We've been taunted,** teased, and tortured over the past few months as rumours of a sequel to the barnstorming launch title *Resistance: Fall of Man* ran amok. Now, thankfully, we are being teased no more as *Resistance 2* has finally been announced, along with a batch of info as to the content of the game itself.

Let's get the mindblowing bullet points out of the way first shall we: TWO single

player campaign modes, one of which features EIGHT player co-op. SIXTY player online multiplayer, taking place in enormous, huge scale, epic multiplayer maps.

Okay... a few deep breaths, then we'll go into details.

The main game campaign stays with Hale (contrary to previous rumours) as his plane is shot down en route to the

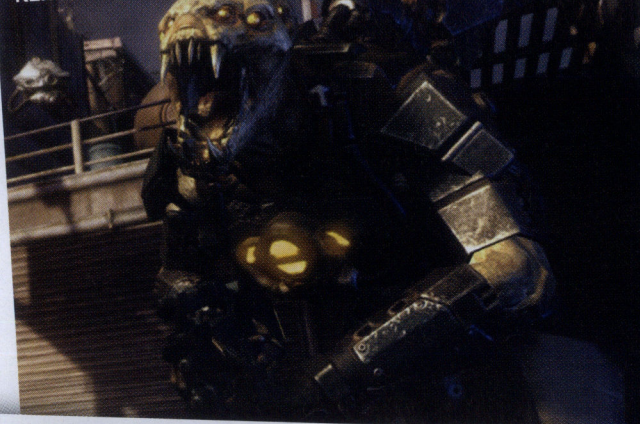
good ol' US of A. Details on plot are understandably scarce at this early stage, but from what we can gather one of the single player campaigns will be single player only, whilst the second campaign will be built around co-op: which incidentally can handle two players locally (the eight player co-op works over the PlayStation Network).

Huge scale maps are currently in development to handle the sort of anarchic mayhem that 60 players online will inevitably create. Insomniac have been working on a squad system to try and manage the chaos, with each team having different objectives to work on as the game unfolds. This has been combined with well made maps, designed to create choke points and cover to engineer the best experience possible for a huge amount of players.

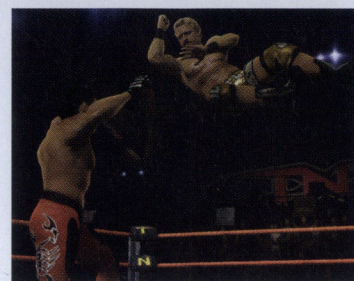
This mindset of all round improvement has extended itself to all aspects of *Resistance 2*. Insomniac have been hard at work improving all aspects of the game, from the graphics to the AI, and are primed to release a game that taps into the huge potential of the PS3. The amount of enemies onscreen has improved dramatically – as has the overall look of the game, with vastly improved textures, and lighting. *Resistance 2* has the potential to blow all other console shooters to smithereens, and possibly piss on the ashes... from a great height.

More details as they come in folks. Look for a full hands on preview very, very soon.

■ "GOOD AFTERNOON CAN YOU POINT ME TO THE NEAREST KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN PLEASE MR HUMAN THANKYOU!"



■ "Uh, I don't want to be a burden but..."



## FEEL THE IMPACT

**For the uninitiated,** TNA is the much vaunted competition to the WWE: a relatively new wrestling company with some fresh new ideas, featuring some of the best wrestlers in the world today.

Combining some old stars you may recognise, such as Kurt Angle, Jeff Jarret, Sting, and Booker T with rising stars such as Samoa Joe and AJ Styles, TNA is slowly becoming a legitimate contender to the increasingly stale WWE.

And this is reflected in *TNA Impact!*, the new videogame developed by Midway. Even at this early stage, the character models easily surpass anything seen in wrestling games to date, and with Samoa Joe and AJ Styles (both reportedly huge gamers) giving in-depth advice to the team at every juncture, we could be looking at the best wrestling game since the original PlayStation days...

### WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT...

#### Resistance 2

Oh my God! Oh my God! Oh my God!

#### Rock Band

Will rock you... thoroughly.

#### Darth Vader

Kaaaawww... PAH... Kaaaawww... PAH...

#### Showtime

Paradise owns, but Showtime? Hmmm...

#### UT3

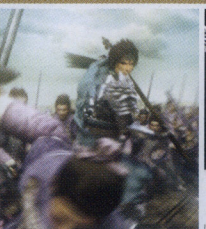
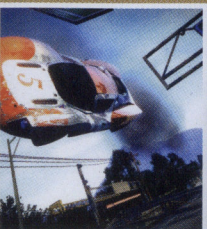
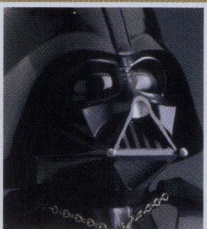
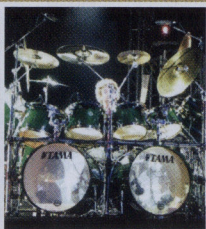
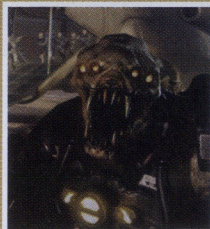
No spitscreen? MASSIVE FAIL!

#### Dynasty Warriors 6

KOEI, just go away, will you? Leave us be!

#### Crappy ports

We hate you. We hate you so much!



HOT!

NOT!



BUZZ

# INFO NUDGE

Prodding you in the ribs with all the latest newsbites...

## HAZY

Release dates for *Haze*: about as trustworthy as Richard Nixon, and twice as slippery. Last we heard it would squeeze into December, then January. Now Ubisoft has confirmed that yes, we will be seeing *Haze* by the middle of the year. Um, thanks guys, but we'll believe it when we see it.

## TURN AROUND

Games set in the past – no big deal. Games set in the future – whoop-de-doo. Games set in the in an alternate past universe? Sweetness. Taking a moment in history (Churchill's close shave with death) *Turning Point* looks set to take an interesting idea, and turn it into a believable gaming scenario. And yes, we're killing Nazis again – hurray!

## THE MAN/WOMAN IN THE MIRROR

*Mirror's Edge* is an upcoming FPS slash Action game that takes the parkour antics of *Assassin's Creed* and plunks them head first into a futuristic utopian/dystopian world where the main character 'Faith' must use her free running skills to deliver top secret info to her clients. The first screenshots of this game were recently released, and are looking mightily impressive at this point – look for the full preview soon.

## U2?

This is just a blatant rumour doing the rounds on the interweb at the moment, but out of the fragile hope (or terror depending on your tastes) that it might come true we're reporting it anyway. The rumour states that the next entry into the *Guitar Hero* franchise will feature a multitude of U2 tracks exclusively. Of course playing nothing but U2 songs until the end of time may be your own personal hell, but it could be worse, it could be Status Quo (shudder)...

# THE DARK SIDE...

Despite the fact that the *Soul Calibur* franchise is probably our favourite beat em up on the planet, for some reason *Soul Calibur IV* hadn't quite set our imagination on fire as of late. Yes, it looks pretty stellar, and yes the boobies have been amplified to pornstar specifications, but something seemed to be missing to an extent.

Until now...

It was only last month, in our Games of 2008 feature that we mentioned a hankering for some awesome cross promotional characters, like the ones seen and loved in *Soul Calibur II*. Well, as the screens to your right show, the call has been answered, in a very, very big way.

Darth Vader. Yes, that Darth Vader (as if there could be another Darth Vader) is the newly announced playable character featured in *Soul Calibur IV*, and while naysayers may point to the fact that his inclusion into the *Soul Calibur* universe makes absolutely no sense whatsoever, we say, "Shut up" and go back to dreaming about slashing up dudes with a lightsaber.

In other news, 360 owners will have to make do with Yoda (ha ha – losers). Yeah, we'll think about you guys, playing with a leprosy-laden green Chihuahua while we're force choking suckers as the greatest villain in cinematic history...



■ "Is Darth Vader gonna have to choke a bitch?"



■ Vader's latest move: force testicle grab

■ Keith Richards... before make-up



# BIOSHOCK 2 FOR PS3?

This is what one might call blatant 'rumour and speculation', and that's being generous, but hey, go easy on a brother – it's been a slow month for news! Anyways... 2K Boston, creators of the admittedly excellent *Bioshock*, has recently been advertising for PS3 developers.

Considering the commercial and critical success of *Bioshock*, it's pretty safe to say that this team is working on a sequel or, at the very least, a spiritual successor to *Bioshock*. The attempt to add PS3 developers to the 2K Boston team would suggest that a version of this game, whatever shape or form it happens to take, will make an appearance at some point on the PlayStation 3. We hope.

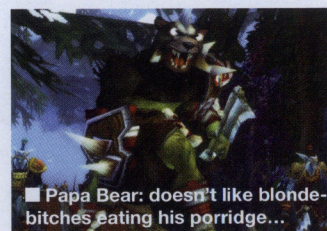
# WOW ON CONSOLE?

While eagle eyed readers may have seen our report claiming that Blizzard had no plans to bring the *WoW* phenomenon to consoles, a recent meeting with a Vivendi representative resulted in some leaked info suggesting evidence to the contrary.

When discussing the upcoming *Prototype*, and online multiplayer prospects for the game, Chris Ansell from Radical entertainment stated that

"it's gonna get more and more like what *WoW* are doing, with thousands of players on console, eventually. Which is pretty exciting..."

It may have been a slip of the tongue, but it definitely suggests that Blizzard may be set to make couch potatoes of us all, increasing the body mass index of gamers exponentially, with a home console version of *World of Warcraft* in the near future.



■ Papa Bear: doesn't like blonde-bitches eating his porridge...



# BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Playing games as a girl has its ups and downs. On the one hand we have deal with all the crap thrown at us, such as *Barbie's Horse*

*Adventures* et al, but on the other hand designers are becoming way more savvy at presenting games to the superior sex – and we can simply play all the games you fellas play regardless. Sadly, however, when it comes to online gaming my experience thus far has been almost 100% negative. Big time. Anytime I make any attempt to speak into the

headset, I get either abused, hit on, or subsequently blamed for every loss our team takes, simply because I'm a "stupid cow who should be washing the dishes". I suppose it doesn't help that my PSN name is Babelicious213, but come on guys! Go easy on the ladies, we love gaming just as much as you...  
Jessica Greene, Games Writer





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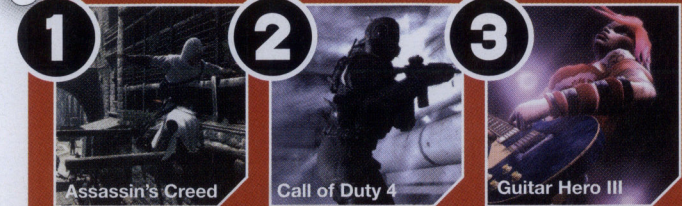
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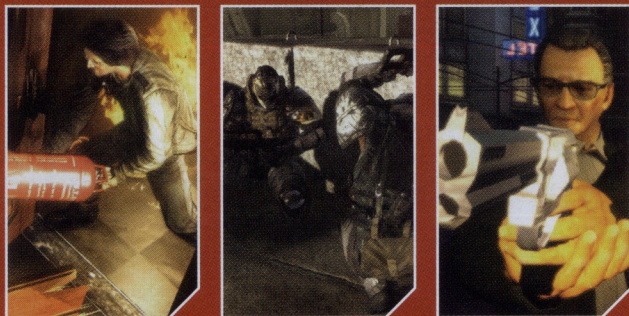


# TOP 10 GAMES CHART



Rank	Title	Category	Distributor
4	Need for Speed ProStreet	Driving	EA
5	Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	Action	Sony
6	FIFA 08	Sports	EA
7	Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	Action	Atari
8	Ratchet & Clank Future	Action	Sony
9	Medal of Honor: Airborne	Shooter	EA
10	WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	Fighting	THQ

## RELEASE SCHEDULE

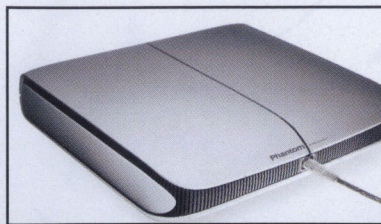


Format	Title	Category	Distributor
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### EARLY 2008

PS3	Haze	FPS	Ubisoft
PSP	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Sports	Atari
PSP	FlatOut: Head On	Driving	Activision
PSP	N+	Puzzle	Atari
PS3	Turning Point: Fall of Liberty	Action	Atari
PSP	Downstream Panic	Puzzle	Atari
PSP	Metal Gear Solid: Graphic Novel	Manga	Atari
PS3	Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	Driving	Sony
PS3	Grand Theft Auto IV	Adventure	Rockstar
PS3	Metal Gear Solid 4	Action	Atari
PS3	Enemy Territories: Quake Wars	FPS	Activision
PS3	Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Action	Activision
PS3	Tom Clancy's EndWar	RTS	Ubisoft
PS3	Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway	FPS	Ubisoft
PS3	Condemned 2: Bloodshot	FPS	Sega
PS3	Viking: Battle for Asgard	Adventure	Sega
PS3	Army of Two	Action	EA
PS2	Godzilla: Unleashed	Fighting	Atari
PS3	NFL Street 4	Sports	EA
PS3	Conflict: Denied Ops	Action	Atari
PS3	Rock Band	Party	EA
PS3	HEI\$T	Action	Atari
PSP	Riviera: The Promised Land	RPG	Red Ant
PS2	Tales of the Abyss	Action	Sony
PS3	Alone in the Dark	Action	Atari
PS3	Midnight Club: Los Angeles	Driving	Rockstar

## TOP TEN: CONSOLES THAT FELL TO THE MIGHT OF SONY...



**1 The Phantom**  
The what now? This console is such a turdfeet that it has never (and hopefully never will be) released), losing upwards of \$70m in the process. We'll be surprised if you've even heard of this one.



**5 Neo Geo**  
Basically an arcade box you could hook up to your TV, the Neo Geo was ridiculously expensive back in the day, and is still expensive now. One rare game recently sold for an insane \$14,000.



**2 The 3DO**  
Admittedly the 3DO was already getting roasted alive by the Megadrive and the SNES, before the launch of the PlayStation, but Sony's 32-bit beast was the final nail in the coffin of this failed experiment...



**6 Saturn**  
Poor little blighter. You tried your best... and you failed miserably, the lesson is... never try. A lesson Sega sadly failed to learn by subsequently releasing the Dreamcast in 1999 (see Number 9)



**3 Atari Jaguar**  
Do the math, they said. 64-bit is better than 32-bit, they said (before admitting the PlayStation was actually more powerful). On top of all this – the games were beyond arse.



**7 Gamecube**  
Could do better. Yes the 'Cube had a handful of top games (including RE4... before the PS2 dammit!) but couldn't compete with the sheer might of the PS2 catalogue.



**8 Xbox**  
Too big. Too heavy. Too few games. Too many shooters. Too... f'n green! Halo alone does not a console make.

**9 Dreamcast**  
It hurts to put the 'Cast on this list, cause it was a cool console But the truth hurts, and the truth is – it caved before the towering majesty of the PS2...

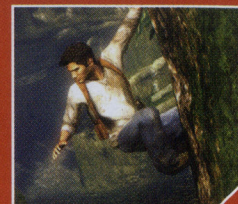
**4 Virtual Boy**  
It hurts your neck. It gives you a headache. It burns your eyes out of their sockets. The games were crap. It cost too much. The controller was weird. Yep, the Virtual Boy sucked big balls.

**10 Nintendo 64**  
Again, like the Dreamcast, this burns. We loved the N64, and GoldenEye in particular, but let's face facts: PS1... 100m units sold, N64... 32m units sold.

## WINNERS

From the comps in OPS #12

**Die Hard:** C Csisz, R Timms, J Chant, M Fahey, A Hammond, S Lee, O Maddock, E Dean. **Uncharted:** J Dekuyer, M Stewart, S Olive, A Farrell, P Tsung. **Timeshift:** J Fichera, N Reed, W Potts. **Kubrick:** K Maskell, P Cunningham, I Thompson, F Doxey. All other winners notified by email.

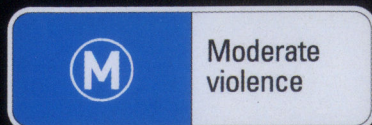
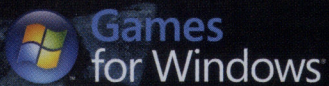
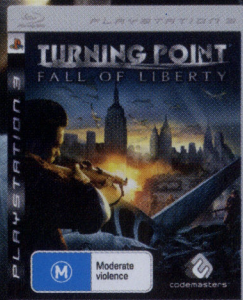
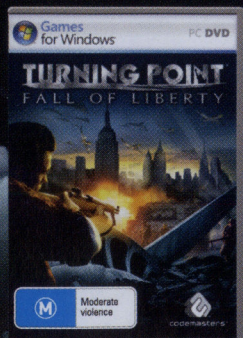
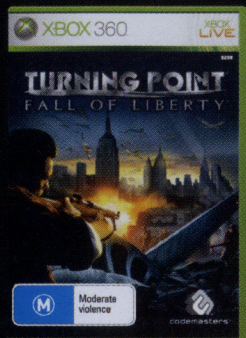




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Your chance to WIN it all...

# COMPS

## HOW TO ENTER

Send entries to [ops@derwenthoward.com.au](mailto:ops@derwenthoward.com.au) with the name of the competition in the subject line, or post them to *OPS Magazine*, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1555 with the name of the competition CLEARLY MARKED on the envelope. Alternatively head to [www.gameplayer.com.au](http://www.gameplayer.com.au) for details. Include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, contact number, and more importantly, your full address and postcode! All competitions close on March 10. All competitions are open to residents of Australia and New Zealand.

## DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

**Devil May Cry 4's** Dante is hands-down one of gaming's toughest hombres, and not just because he has the guts to be seen in public with his wacky emo hairstyle. Dante's bitch-slapped demons as tall as skyscrapers and has laughed off being stabbed through the heart with seven foot-long broadswords.

As well as spawning one of baddest bad-arses ever, *DMC* has long been a PlayStation institution. The original game came out during the first year of the PS2's reign and was a ridiculously stylish action game that proved just how much the new console was capable of. Another two PS2 sequels cemented *DMC's* reputation as the King of Hard Action.

Seven years after his debut Dante is back in *Devil May Cry 4* with a blockbuster that cranks the action

firmly into ludicrous territory. Thanks to Activision we have 10 copies of the devilishly good *DMC4* to giveaway. Speaking of the devil, Madman has also come to the party and provided two popular manga graphic novels – *Devil May Cry Volume 1 and 2* – and the *Devilman* anime DVD for each lucky winner.

It'd be a sin to miss out on prizes like these so make sure you answer the question below, send it to us marked 'Devil May Cry giveaway' and follow the entry details above.

**Question: If you're a man it's okay to cry when:**

- A** You've stubbed your toe
- B** You're watching a chick flick
- C** Your cricket team's been crushed, and even then it's because "you've got something in your eye"

■ Dante. Likes: Killing stuff, swords, My Chemical Romance.  
Dislikes: Being around others, not wearing makeup, bowling

■ "Oh here she comes, watch out boy she'll chew you up. Oh here she comes, she's a maaaneateer..." 6542





# PRIZE PACK INCLUDES:

## DEVIL MAY CRY 4

With graphics that'll make you cry tears of joy and non-stop intense action, the fourth *Devil May Cry* is like sculling shots of pure adrenaline.



# WIN!



## DEVIL MAY CRY VOLUME 1

An action-packed adventure, pitting good against evil... and brother against brother! A four-million-dollar reward, an unexpected demon attack and a little girl named Alice all conspire to create an amazing adventure.



## DEVIL MAY CRY VOLUME 2

Dante, the giant sword, two-gun toting devil hunter is on a mission for an evil idol known as The Beast Head. But little does Dante know that this mission brings him closer to his eternal enemy.

## DEVILMAN

Based on Go Nagai's famous 1972 anime, *Devilman* details the exploits of weak teenager Akira who becomes possessed by demons and starts kicking shedloads of arse all over the shop.



# MADMAN

ENTERTAINMENT



# AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

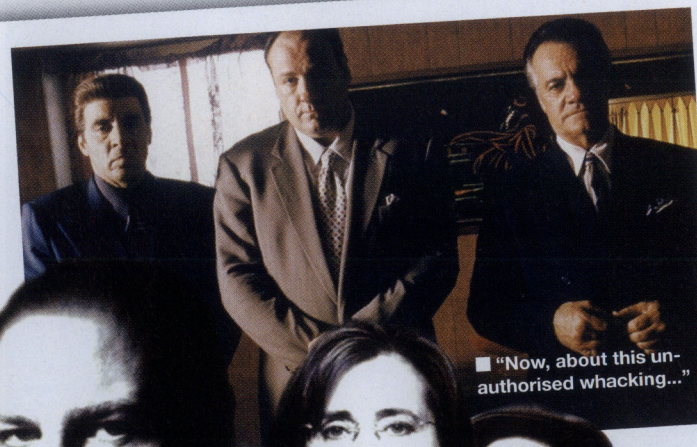
There are tonnes of shows out there claiming to be the latest and greatest but few deserve to even be mentioned in the same breath as *The Sopranos*. Not only is it the most financially successful television series of all time, *The Sopranos* has also scored universal acclaim among the critics (snagging 21 Emmy Awards and five Golden Globes).

To celebrate the DVD release of *The Sopranos: Season Six, Final Episodes* we're stoked to be able to offer one of the most exciting DVD giveaways ever. Six insanely lucky readers will get the chance

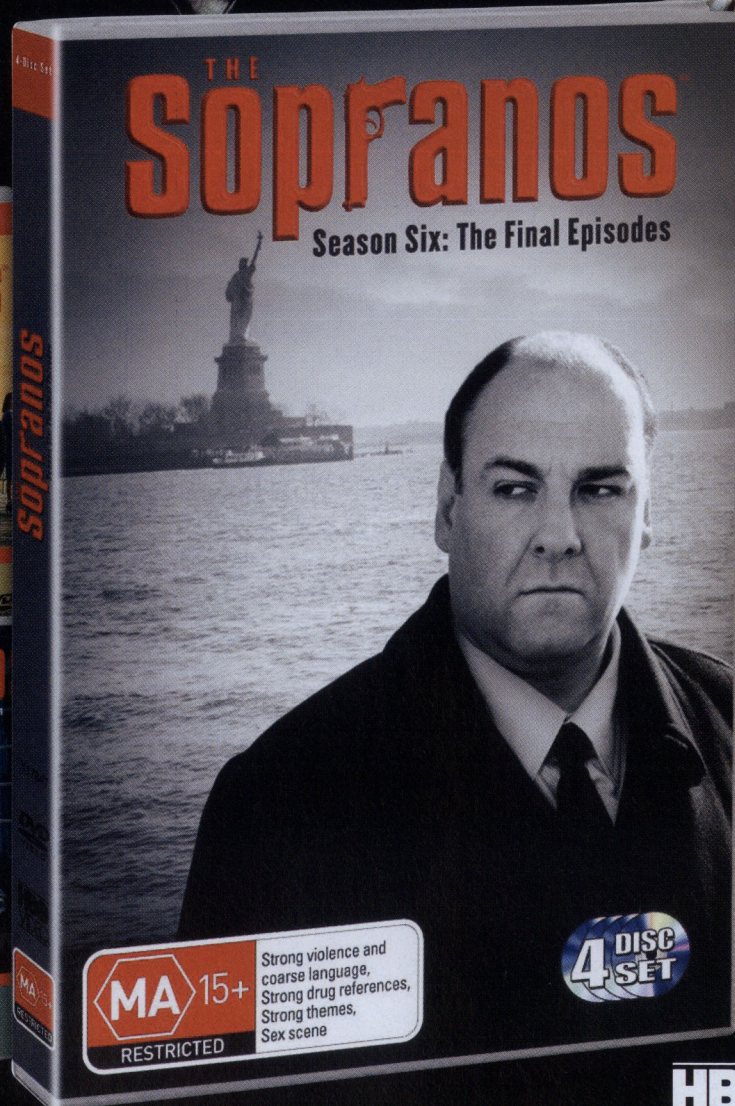
to win not one, but all six seasons of *The Sopranos'* criminally addictive episodes. That's over \$300 worth for each winner! To enter this amazing giveaway simply answer the question below, marking it 'The Sopranos giveaway' and follow the entry details on page 16.

**Question: *The Sopranos* star James Gandolfini played a gay hitman in which movie?**

- A The Mexican
- B Get Shorty
- C Ass Assassins



■ "Now, about this unauthorised whacking..."



**HBO**  
VIDEO

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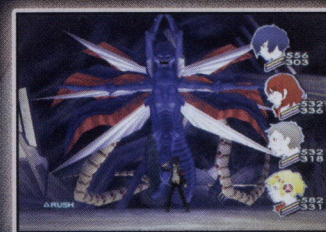


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PlayStation 2

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## GET LOST

**Hey, come back.** We didn't mean literally. It's just that an amazing swag of *Lost* merchandise has washed up on the shores of *OPS* (yes, we run the magazine from our holiday beach house over the Christmas break – what of it?) and we want to give you a chance to win it all.

We're all huge fans of *Lost* at *OPS*, and by the time you read this we'll be eagerly tuning in for the fourth season (especially now that Channel 7 has finally upgraded its HDTV from its old craphouse 576p to proper 1080i). To help you relive the nail-biting previous season we've got five *Lost* Season 3 DVDs to give away. These lucky winners will also get the chance to live the *Lost* experience thanks to Ubisoft's challenging and exciting adventure game (on PS3), as well as decking out their wardrobe with a cool *Lost* t-shirt. On top of this another five winners will be taking home copies of the *Lost* PS3 game and the cool t-shirt.

To be in the running for this crazy castaway giveaway simply answer the question below, marking it 'Lost giveaway' and follow the entry details on page 16.

**Question: What's the name of the fat guy in *Lost* who never loses any weight, despite spending months marooned on an island?**

- A Twirly
- B Hurley
- C Girly

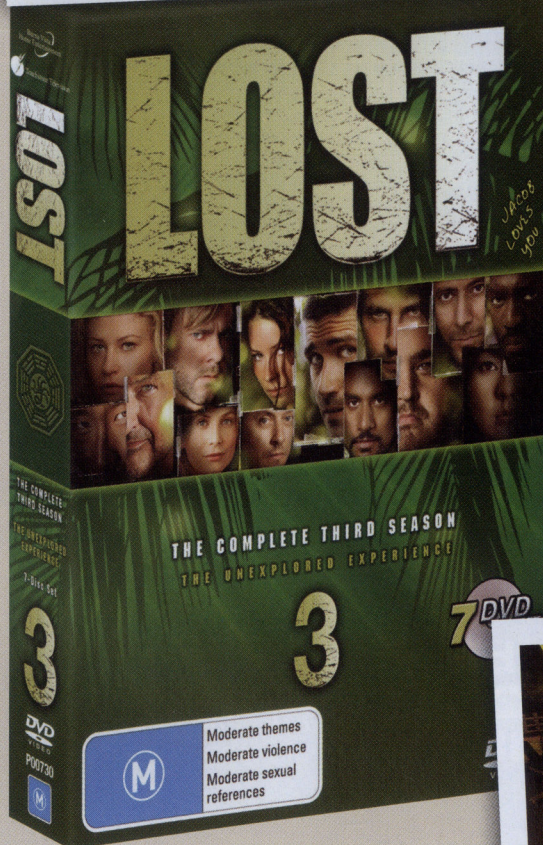
■ "The hatch... faith... push the button... dammit Jack... etc" "Shut it baldy"

**WIN!**



THE VIDEO GAME

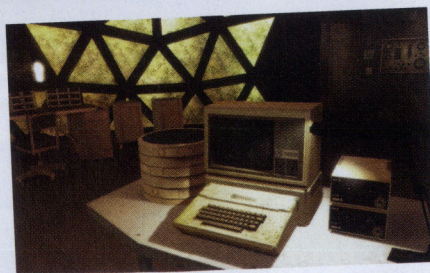
**LOST**



Moderate themes,  
Moderate violence



UBISOFT

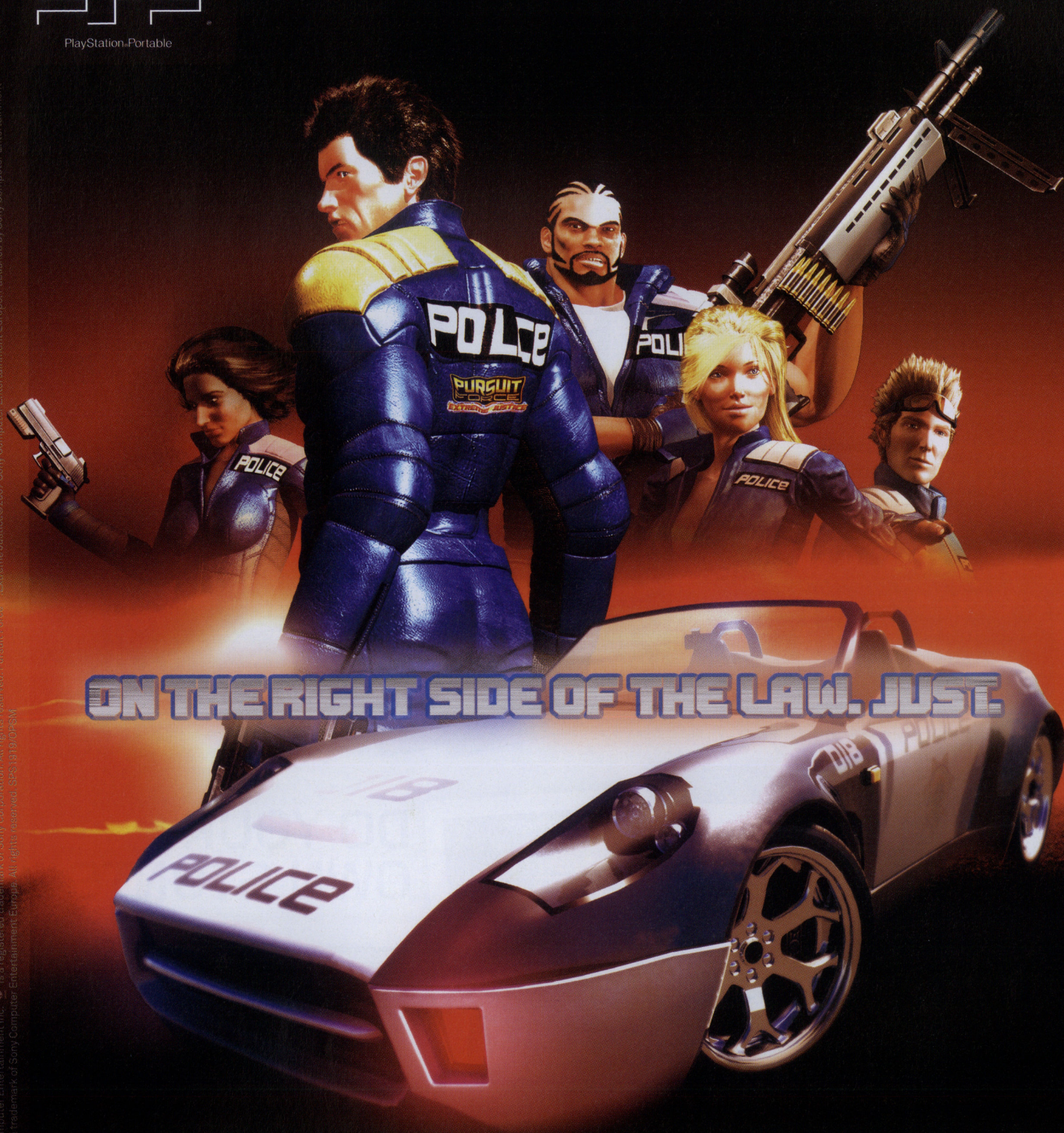




PS2

PlayStation Portable

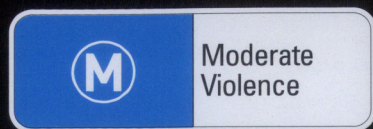
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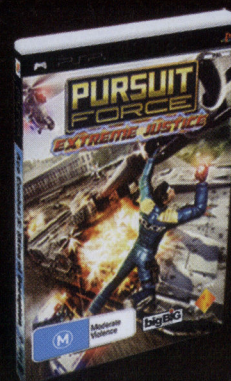
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# WHAT A GUY!

**Just like the** legendary rising-from-the-grave mofo himself, Obi Wan Kenobi, *Family Guy* was resurrected from the grave after originally being cancelled after three seasons (making history as the first TV show to ever be 'un-cancelled'). After its triumphant comeback, *Family Guy* has gone from strength to strength with a feature film, hilarious new seasons, and now, the homage of all homages, *Family Guy Presents: Blue Harvest*.

*Blue Harvest* is a very special episode of *Family Guy* based on the original *Star Wars* film (*Episode IV: A New Hope*) with the show's stars lampooning the much-loved sci-fi classic. The name 'Blue Harvest' is used because it was the code name assigned to *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* during filming but don't feel left out if you didn't pick that up. Although the *Family Guy* creators are clearly diehard *Star Wars* fans, their attention to detail only enhances the appeal of the unrelenting stream of gags.

To celebrate the release of *Family Guy Presents: Blue Harvest* on DVD, Fox Home Entertainment has released an amazing Collector's Edition with a T-shirt, trading cards and a never-before-seen 3D fight scene, made possible with your own set of 3D glasses.

If you'd like to win one of 16 copies of *Family Guy Presents: Blue Harvest* all you need to do is answer the question

below, send it to us marked 'Blue Harvest Giveaway' and follow the instructions on page 16.

**Question: *Family Guy* star Peter Griffin stars in *Blue Harvest* as:**

- A Princess Leia
- B Han Solo
- C Hahn Premium Lager



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# DO YOUR OWN STUNTS

**If you've caught** *Burnout* fever then we've got the perfect prescription for you – *FlatOut: Head On* is crashing onto PSP and thanks to Activision we've got 10 copies to give away.

Like *Burnout*, the *FlatOut* series isn't as much about racing as it is about destroying your opponents in vicious crashes. It's like a bare-knuckled boxing match with cars. After two top-notch *FlatOut* games on PS2, the PSP gets its own game, crammed full of even more features than the PS2 games.

*FlatOut: Head On* takes advantage of the PSP's recently enabled faster processing power to create the most intense handheld carnage ever. Whether you're up for destruction derbies, career racing, multiplayer or even the Ragdoll Stunt Mode (where you crash and launch the driver's body through the windscreen to aim it at targets) *FlatOut* has intense road rage for every occasion – and thanks to PSP you can play it anytime, anywhere.

If you'd like to win one of 10 copies of *FlatOut: Head On* all you need to do is answer the question below, send it to us marked 'FlatOut Giveaway' and follow the instructions on page 16. Smashing, baby!

**Question: The "Head On" in *FlatOut's* title refers to:**

- A A face transplant operation
- B A type of car crash
- C A cool new oral sex move



2005: Fullmetal Alchemist. 2006: Naruto. 2007: Bleach. 2008 is the year of:

# DEATH NOTE

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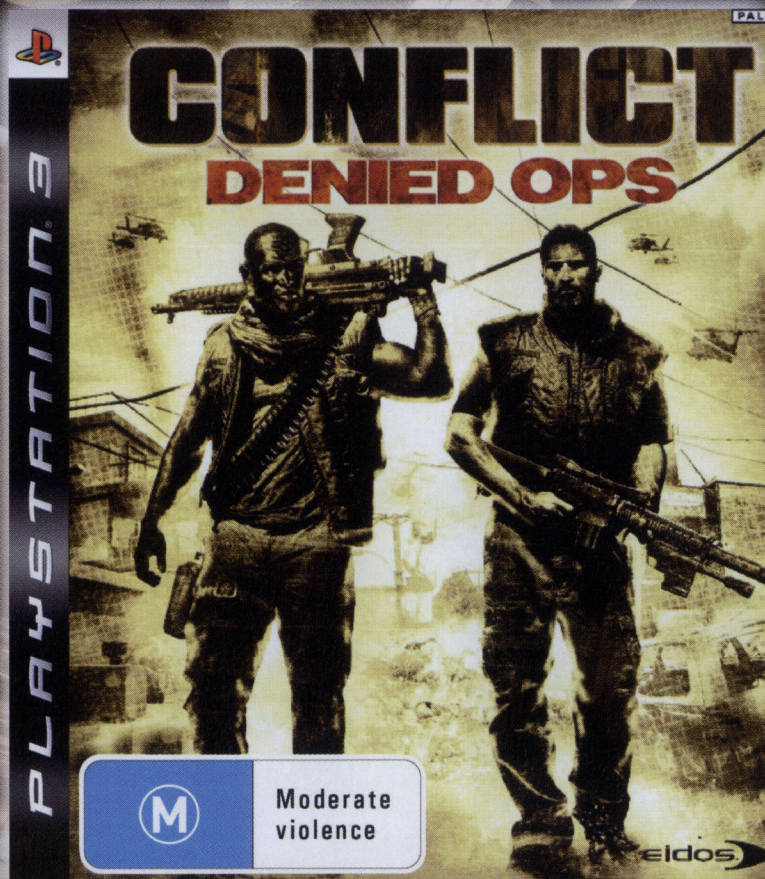




# SUBSCRIBE AND WIN CONFLICT!

# WIN PS3 GAMES!

**SUBSCRIBE** to *OPS* this month and you could win one of 10 copies of Atari's intense tactical warfare game *Conflict: Denied Ops* (see page 42 for our exclusive scoop on the game). Hurry, this is a limited offer!



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**TERMS & CONDITIONS** 1. Information on how to enter, forms part of the terms and conditions of entry. To enter the competition you must answer in 25 words or less: "Why you want to win Conflict?" Eligible participants are required to provide their name, address, postcode and telephone number as well as subscribing to any of the below magazines. 2. Entry is open to all permanent residents of Australia and New Zealand when purchasing new subscriptions to OPS between 15 February, 2008 and 6 March, 2008, inclusive. 3. It is a game of skill and chance plays no part in determining winners. 4. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be transferred. Prizes cannot be redeemed for cash. 5. The judging for the competition will take place on the 15th March, 2008, at Derwent Howard Magazines, Level 7, 35 Grafton Street Bondi Junction NSW. 6. The promoter will not be held liable for any late, lost or misdirected mail. 7. Employees and the immediate families of the promoter and the agencies and companies associated with the promotion are ineligible to enter. 8. The winners will be notified by telephone, post or email. 9. Prizes and values are the recommended retail value as provided by the supplier and are correct at the time of printing. All prize values are in Australian dollars. 10. The promoter shall not be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever that is suffered (including but not limited to direct or consequential loss) or for any personal injury suffered or sustained in connection with any prize/s, except for any liability that cannot be excluded by law. 11. The competition commences on 15 February, 2008 and concludes on 6 March, 2008 with last mail received. 12. All entries become the property of the promoter. 13. Total prize pack includes 10 x Conflict: Denied Ops. Total prize valued at \$1200.00. 14. The promoter is: Derwent Howard Magazines, ABN 400 958 728 89, of Level 7, 35 Grafton Street Bondi Junction NSW 2022. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

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Have your say and win big!

# LETTERS

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### WHAT'S THE SCORE?

**D**ear OPS, I've been meaning to write in for some time about your tweaked scoring system. I like the explanation for each score. It seems far less arbitrary when I know exactly what a 3, or a 5, or an 8 means. I don't know if it's been mentioned in letters before but I think you deserve some props. I don't necessarily agree with all your scores all the time, but you've made the effort to be as clear as possible. Besides, the text of the review is more helpful than a simple number.

I've just picked up a PS3 and come back to the magazine after a few years and am also glad to see that you've stuck with the 1-10 rating. I've got friends who swear by the 1-100, or the decimal place system, but I couldn't disagree more, for a number of reasons. One, it's complete fanboy rubbish. How do you decide whether a game is worth an 84 or an 85, and what exactly is the point? Is the next *Splinter Cell* 1% better than the next *Madden*, and on what planet would anyone give a shit? Two, they're rarely

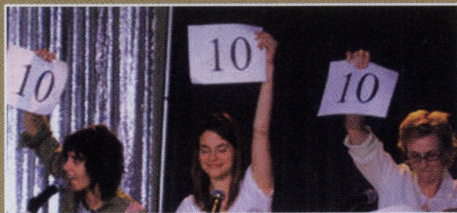
explained well enough (100, awesome, 90, great, 80, pretty good, 70, not terrible, 60, mostly crap, 50 and below, rubbish, is really not good enough). If you can have different degrees of good, you can have different degrees of bad. Three, and most annoying, nobody gives anything 100%. What's the point of rating out of 100% if you never use the whole scale?

Why are films and games so different? Ever see anybody give *Goodfellas* or *Terminator 2* or [insert greatest movie ever] 4.9 stars? No.

I imagine I'm preaching to the converted here, but I felt like a rant and hope you agree.

**Gary Owen, WA**

*Bang on. You get Letter of the Month for taking the words right out of our mouths (even though your handwriting is terrible and it took us forever to transcribe your letter – seriously, did you write it on horseback or something?). You'll never see a 1-100 score system in OPS as it is a waste of time.*



■ "Oil Between the flags buster..."

### SUNK

After having saved for weeks, doing household chores and generally just suffering, the day finally arrives when I can buy my shiny new copy of *Assassin's Creed*. I throw it into my beautiful PS3, start it up, and am stunned by the amazing-ness of this game. But then I reach the docks in Acre, and what do I discover? My hero, Altair, the most agile and amazing videogame character in existence, CANNOT SWIM! I was aghast! I was outraged! In this day and age, with Blu-ray and what have you, game developers cannot even make a character swim. My question is this. Why must developers cut corners, even on the most amazing of games? Why must they cut out one tiny thing, but to have it all crash down on them from a great height? WHY? WHY? WHY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Alexander Garner, via email**

*Well, it's probably a combination of things really. A few things spring to mind. One, he's packing quite a bit of equipment and armour. Sure, he still darts about like a spider monkey on E, but the floating characteristics of, say, 20 kilos of metal junk strapped to your waist are debatable. Two, people of the era (circa*

*1191AD) generally couldn't swim. From our exhaustive research (um, we googled it during lunch) we've found out knights didn't learn to swim until the 1300s (when armour became significantly lighter) and often people even deliberately ensured they couldn't swim (for instance, Irish fisherman did not learn to swim in order to make drowning quick and more merciful rather than an extended struggle). At the end of the day though, despite the fact you're probably right that corner-cutting, however innocent, had something to do with the fact Altair sinks like a stone, videogame characters need some limitations. For example, take away Superman's Kryptonite and he's just a guy that can do anything. Then he's just a massive over-achiever in red undies.*

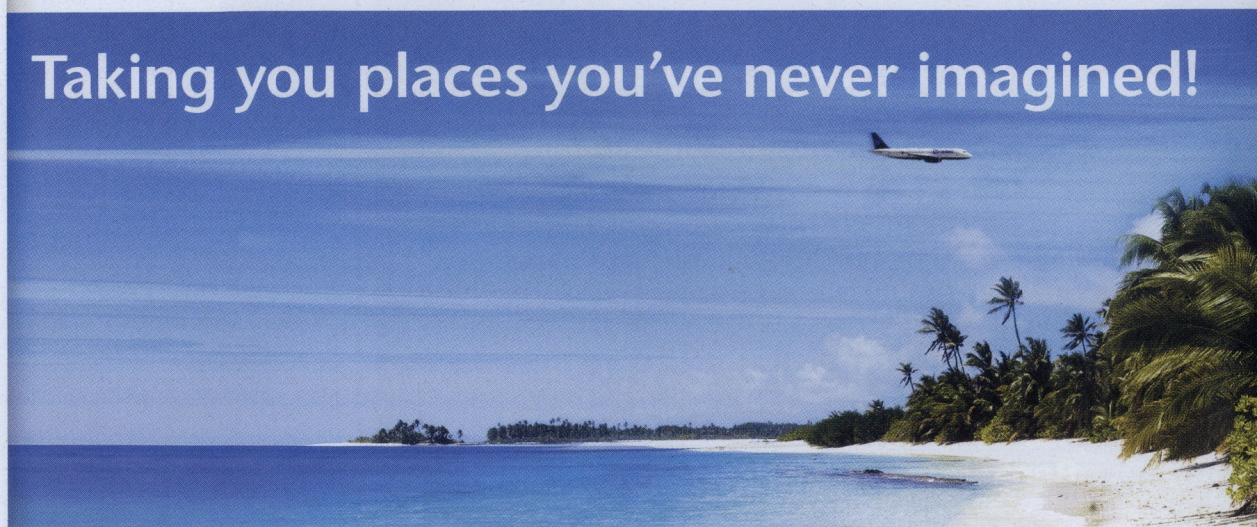


■ The Sex Pistols (unzipping sound)

### ANARCHY IN GH

Hey OPS, great magazine by the way. But I've got a few bones to pick. I've been playing *Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80s* and *Guitar Hero III* a lot lately. I LOVE the games, don't get me wrong, but they're not correct on a lot of things. Firstly in *Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80s* it says 'Ballroom Blitz' is by Krokus, which is kinda true, but it was originally, and made famous by, Sweet who wrote it in the 1970s. Also in *Guitar Hero III* the years some songs were made in are supposedly 2007, but some were around in the 80s, like 'Cult of Personality' by Living Colour and 'Anarchy in the U.K.' by The Sex Pistols. I have just one more small problem. Almost every issue of your magazine that I read I find spelling mistakes and other stuff like that. Other than that I love *Guitar Hero* and your magazine is the only thing that I actually

## Taking you places you've never imagined!





opt to read besides the subtitles in games. Keep the good stuff coming.

**Geoff Quiggin, ACT**

Well spotted Hawkeye, although there's actually a perfectly good reason why 'Cult of Personality' and 'Anarchy in the U.K.' say they were recorded in 2007. It's because they were. Unable to locate the master track for 'Anarchy in the U.K.' the band re-recorded the track last year. The Sex Pistols were obviously sans ex-bassist Sid Vicious (on account of him being dead and all), but he wasn't really a great bassist anyway. The story for 'Cult of Personality' varies. One is that it was cheaper to get the band to re-record it (and the band got more money that way than going through the label). The other is that they didn't think it was hard enough, and they wanted it further down the list. As for any typos in the mag, well, we'll try extra hard this issue. As you can see, we started with all the lower case 'i's in your letter. Ahem.

## SCREWED

Hey, I reckon PS2 owners are kinda getting screwed in the new mag. It doesn't make me read it any less, I love reading about the PS3 stuff, but I find it a bit annoying reading a magazine when the majority of its content is about a console I don't own. Just thinking out loud here. Also, what do you think of the name 'Super Monkey Penguin' for a Guitar Hero band name?

**Caleb Moran, via email**

We know there are over two million PS2s out there in this country but we do what we can. Fact is, there are just fewer new PS2 games out there to cover - it has been eight years, and that's a long time for a console to kick on. We'll still be all over any significant PS2 releases that come along. More importantly, what do we think of 'Super Monkey Penguin'? Well, we think you stole it. From us. You'll be hearing from our lawyer. As soon as we find him. We think he's in Fiji, sleeping with our accountant.

## ■ Soccer. Questionable



## THE WINDS OF CHANGE

Don't the times change?

I have always been a PES player, ever since its creation, over FIFA. It was a straight-forward choice, the presentation was top notch and it was just a more realistic and entertaining gaming experience.

It was a class above the rest to say the very least.

However this year I decided I would give both FIFA and PES a shot as I saw FIFA was getting some impressive reviews,

including in this awesome mag.

I played FIFA and whoa, it was actually really good. Great build up of plays, no ridiculous goals that were common in previous years plus the movement of the players and the ball physics were just spot on.

I thought to myself how awesome is PES going to be!

I was amazed how wrong I was! PES has not improved at all since the last game. I would rather have the previous game with updated graphics! Bloody hell, I've never played/wanted a soccer game this fast. It all just felt wrong. What did the creators do to this fine legacy that reigned supreme over countless years?

This lead me to cross over to the other side, the other

side which seemed unstable, and under constant pressure from rivals for many years, and only just found their feet. I haven't regretted it since. Some friends and my brother and I played it for hours and I have not had that much fun playing a soccer game in a long time!

In the end it's all up to your own preference and, after all, we're all winning if we have a good time. But be sure not to overlook the new and improved FIFA, you will be pleasantly surprised just as I was. I hope PES can bring their A-game next season and not fall behind.

**Mike, via email**

You're not the only one. Mark thought he was going a little crazy when he came to the same conclusion, but that's how it is.

## SPEAK TO US

Love the new mag? Hate the new mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games - on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

OPS Feedback  
Derwent Howard PO Box 1037  
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355  
ops@derwenthoward.com.au

## CUTTINGS

Delicious bite-sized letter morsels that are easy to swallow and won't ruin your dinner. They're like Milky Ways you can read...

### ARSE PIRATE

I love you all, and if it wasn't for my male genitalia getting in the way, I would want to mother your children (except you Naz - if I was an arse pirate, I wouldn't even hand you over to the cabinboy).

**Mike Oxonfire, via email**

Security, we need you to check if Mike Oxonfire... hey, wait a minute...

### METROPHOBE

What the hell is with the SingStore updates? The support so far is rubbish. Incidentally, I couldn't agree more when you laid the boot into the SingStar packshot. That model is a dick.

**Troy Shepard, NSW**

There was an update on January 18 and another on February 6, but nothing good. Down with giant sunglasses!

### TOP GUN

When am I going to get my hands on a full blown, eye watering, vomit inspiring aircraft simulator? What's that you say? What about Blazing Angels? I have played both editions and been forced to rate them as weak as Nick Nolte's sperm.

**Adam Plitz, via email**

Dude, what does that even mean?

### PLAYER HATER

Your mag always makes me giggle, but don't you guys ever get sick of taking the piss out of third-tier celebrities and Australian Idol dropouts?

**Adam Muller, via email**

No.



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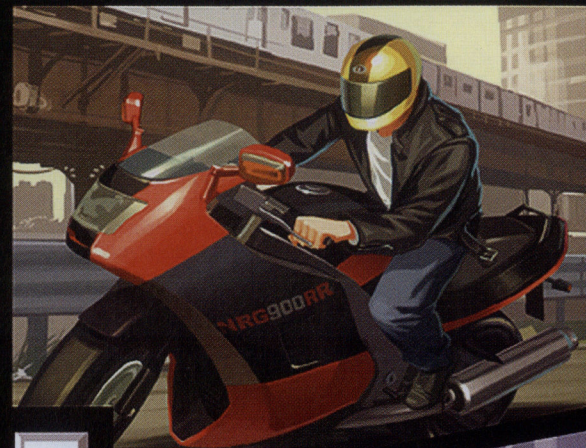


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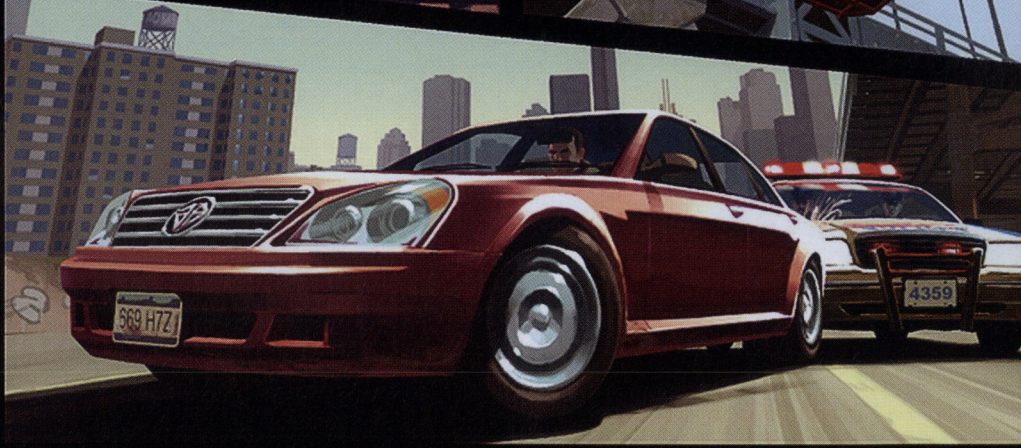
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# grand theft auto IV





# Great Expectations

Writing about *GTA* is both a gift and a curse, in equal measure. The positives, of course, are self explanatory: you get to see the game itself, for a start – you get to watch it in action, you get that familiar stiffening in your pants as the game begins, and you get to indulge in an almost infinite number of ‘I can’t believe I just saw that happen before my very eyes’ moments before collapsing into an epileptic fit of sheer orgasmic pleasure...

**Y**ou vacate the room a trembling mess. You want to call your friends, you want to write home to maw, paw and the folks back home about this life-defining experience. You just got to see the game of the year months before its release and all you want to do is stand on the highest rooftop with a megaphone screaming, “I JUST SAW *GTA*! WHO WANTS TO TOUCH ME?!”

Then you get to walk into the office next day, cock of the walk, accosted by all as you swagger, chest out, to your desk. They all ask the same question: “How was it?” they whisper in hallowed tones...

The next hour is spent relaying every last detail of genius to anyone who’ll listen. Every aspect: the graphics, the weapons, the new features, everything, before sitting down at your desk in front of your keyboard, fingers at the ready to tell the whole world about this insane and incredible new videogame – then BLANK. You sit staring at an empty word document: where in the bluest of blue hells do we start?

Why? Because *GTA*IV is not about one single moment, it’s not about one new aspect of gameplay, it’s not about how many polygons the main character has, and it’s not about the resolution. It’s not even about relaying, piece by piece, all the amazing incidents

that occurred during the demo – it’s about the enormity, scope and scale of the entire package. Trying to describe in one small feature like this will only result in a garbled, stunted, stuttered “awesome”. Because that’s what *GTA*IV is: a cohesive, tangible, perfectly judged example of sheer and utter “awesome”.

## JUST TELL US ABOUT THE GAME, IDIOT!

Okay then, let’s start then with what *GTA*IV is not.

*GTA*IV is not a simple high definition update of *GTA*III, with a couple of tweaks here and there, or even a completely new game with the bare minimum of changes to the base

mechanics. From the very instant you see the game being played, the enormous leap the franchise has taken from previous gen hardware is immediately obvious.

Niko walks with a swagger that instantly gives you an impression of his character: an imposing, confident, hunched over gait creating the impression of a man in a desperate situation, willing to do anything to survive in a new environment. It’s a huge leap from previous *GTA*s, and a step forward for gaming in general.

Delving into the first mission these changes become more evident. If you’ve been following our extensive coverage of the game thus far you’ll be aware that one of the core mechanics of the game – stealing cars – has been completely rejigged, but



■ “Fuzzy Dice, really – was it necessary” “Yes. Yes it was”

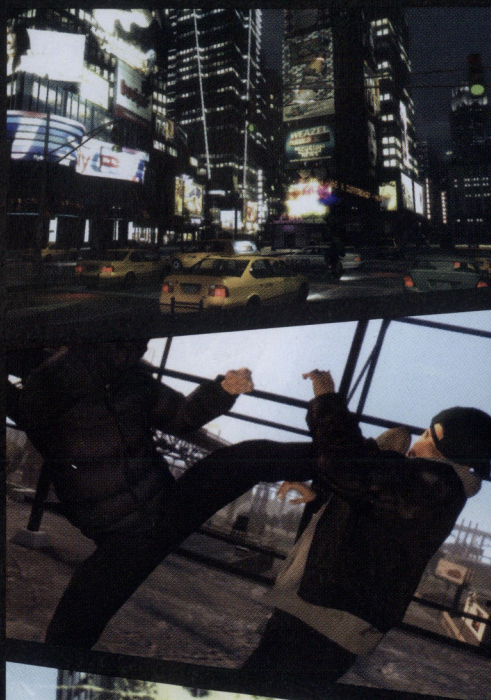


■ “THE STONES DR. JONES!” “You betrayed Sheba!” “THE STONES! AIIIEEE!” (What! It reminded us of that bit from *The Temple of Doom*)



■ Did you hear about the people who charged their friends to see their dog? It was a ‘shitzu’! A shit zoo? Get it? Ah, quit yer whining...





■ "You call that a chopper? Check this out!" (unzipp –)  
"Argh... I was only kidding, leave me alone!"



## HOME VIDEOS

As much as we hate to say it, one of the things *Halo 3* did right was its Theatre Mode, which constantly recorded you as you played, allowing you to go back and replay all those 'magic' moments. If any game was worthy of such a function it would undoubtedly be *GTA IV*. Imagine being able to relive all those insane moments that inevitably occur, then pause, detach the camera, and move around the scene soaking up every last detail. When we mentioned it to our Rockstar rep he merely suppressed a mysterious smile, before saying, "Wait and see..."



you're probably not aware of the wider implications of this reboot.

## I FOUGHT THE LAW!

During the mission in question Niko had to steal a police car, located outside the police station (of all places) and hack into the police system to locate the position of a snitch. After using a well placed elbow to smash the window of the passenger seat, Niko began to hotwire the car...

As expected, one donut-munching cop soon became aware of this crime in progress and began to approach the car in question, which incidentally was near impossible to hotwire! The tension built inexplicably as Niko got the car started just in time, before driving frantically out of range of the approaching cop.

This was not a scripted scene. Had Niko been attempting to steal another vehicle, the whole situation could have played out completely differently. The car may have been unlocked, with the keys inside, or the hotwiring process might have been a hundred times easier. Everything is randomised to increase tension and a sense of dread into the game world – you never know just how easy or difficult it may be to partake in the

## Everything is randomised to increase tension and a sense of dread into the game world...

simple act of stealing a car.

The animation, the tension, and the overall realism featured in all elements of this section had our jaws glued to the floor. Amazingly, however, this was a tiny drop in the ocean compared to what we were about to see next...

## WHY CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS?

One of the new aspects of *GTA IV* that has been hinted at, yet never fully confirmed or expanded upon, is the friend system – the way in which you manage your social and business life via your mobile phone. We had been informed it would be an important part of the game, but nothing could have prepared us for just how far reaching and dynamic this system would be.

After completing the first mission, Niko gave his cousin Roman a call on his mobile, selecting an option from a list our eyes weren't quite quick enough to see (although we noted bowling was one option). Niko invited

Roman out for a drink, telling him he would pick him up in an hour. Again, this wasn't a scripted cut-scene, or part of mission, just the player, calling up Roman to shoot the shit, and invite him out for a couple of vodkas.

And when Niko said 'an hour', that meant an hour (in game time). We were told that if Niko was late for this appointment he'd better call ahead and cancel, because if he didn't Roman would get pissed off and possibly not answer his mobile next time, when things were serious.

So we picked up Roman, guzzled down some voddies and got literally blind drunk, before heading out to the street. Playing as Niko drunk, surprisingly, gave us possibly the best example yet of how accurately and brilliantly Rockstar has implemented the Euphoria dynamic motion engine. As the camera blurred, and spun uncontrollably, Niko and Roman stumbled over each other with uncanny realism – falling to the floor when gravity got too much for their

alcohol-addled brains. And when Niko hit the deck in a drunken heap, Roman soon followed suit as he tripped over Niko's inanimate body.

And, of course, the sight of these two Ruskies, staggering around drunker than Yeltsin, began to attract a crowd as they clambered to their feet screaming obscenities at passer bys, hanging onto lampposts for sheer life. Of all the groundbreaking game features NaturalMotion must have imagined, when designing its groundbreaking Euphoria engine, we doubt it ever expected the best example of its hard work would be manifested in the sight of two drunken idiots tripping out of a random bar.

But the friend system gives players more than just an opportunity to hit the bars and drink yourself into oblivion, it's an integral part of the game world Rockstar is attempting to create. If you make and maintain contacts throughout the game, you will reap the benefits in later missions.

## CUTTING EDGE

Although Rockstar seems intent on making all the action in *GTA IV* playable, it's also important to note the huge leap made in the game's cut-scenes. We were privy to a couple, and the quality of the voice acting,



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY AND THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW**

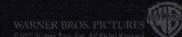
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## MAGIC MOMENTS...

Here are just a couple of insane things that occurred in our short time spent watching *GTAIV*...



### Rocket Bouncing...

It didn't happen when we were watching, but our Rockstar rep told us that one time they misfired a rocket at a shallow angle, causing it to actually *bounce* under a car.



### Head Snapping...

The Euphoria engine is capable of creating the best deaths we've ever seen: one particular dude almost had his neck snap in two as we fired a semi-automatic into his brain.



### Blind Firing...

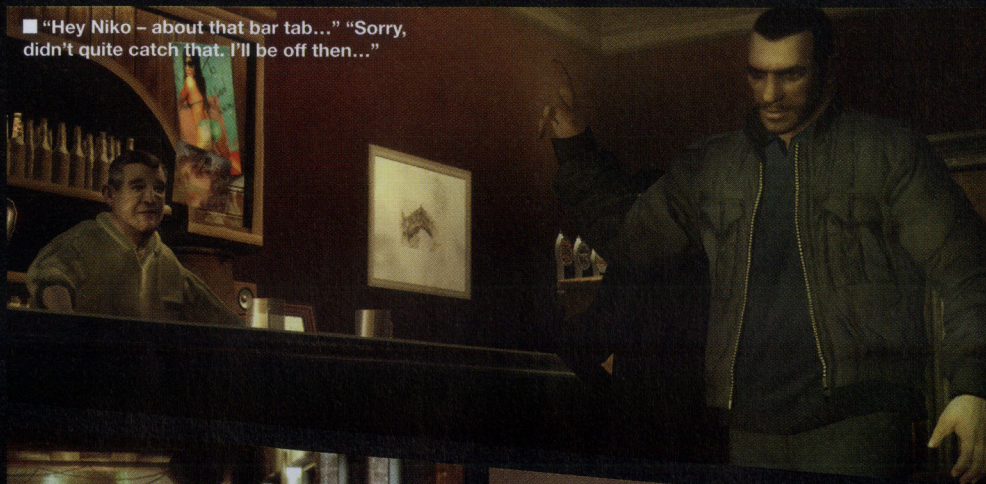
You can blind fire any weapon in the game – even the rocket launcher, our personal favourite – which can result in a fair amount of unnecessary collateral damage...



### Cover Sliding...

If you charge fast enough into cover, Niko does an awesomely convincing baseball slide into safety – *Lethal Weapon*-style. Except the protagonist isn't an anti-Semitic drunken nutcase.

■ "Hey Niko – about that bar tab..." "Sorry, didn't quite catch that. I'll be off then..."



combined with the perfect lip synching and facial animations pushed the cut-scenes to *Uncharted* levels – a huge achievement considering the huge scope of *GTAIV*'s open world.

These scenes are as funny as ever, but the animations allow Rockstar to go more in-depth than it has previously – so while the cut-scenes still retain moments of ingenious hilarity (especially when starring Brucie – the equivalent of a roided up Biff Tannen) there are moments of real poignancy to some of the scenes, with acting that really reflects the tension between characters.

It's all part of Rockstar's attempt to move away from the simplistic pastiche of previous *GTA*s – this time, as opposed to parody, *GTAIV* wants to be a story that can exist in its own right. It's been said that this iteration is less of a rags to riches tale than rags to better rags, and this is reflected in all aspects of story telling, from the scenery, to the acting and the characters themselves. The humour is still there, but it's safe to say that, this time round, there'll be a lot more going on in the story besides comedy.

## ...AND SO MUCH MORE

However, mentioning specific things

regarding *GTAIV*, removing them from the context of the game itself, almost cheapens the impact of merely *being* in the game world itself. In the short 30-40 minute demo we witnessed there were literally hundreds of moments that cried out for rewind.

One instance had us driving past a broken down car, with a NPC hunched over an open bonnet, having a glance at his bugged engine – and just as we marvelled at this random occurrence we turned the corner to see a cop in the process of arresting a criminal for an unknown offense at gunpoint. It's reflective of the sheer depth of the game world that this occurs on the fly, regardless of your interaction. It's an overused phrase to the point of cliché – but with *GTAIV* Rockstar really has succeeded in creating a living, breathing city.

## CHANNELING INDY...

If we had to isolate one moment of our demo, however, as the moment that left us with the most indelible mark of outright genius – it would have to be our assault on the heroin truck.

Niko's mission was to steal a copious amount of the brown stuff from a truck surrounded by a group of Triads. Approaching with caution, we

had to make use of *GTA*'s new cover and targeting system, taking potshots with an automatic sub machine gun.

After exchanging lead for a couple of minutes, and finishing off wounded enemies, we decided it was time to finish things off... by firing off a few rockets – whammy!

And the explosions... oh, the explosions – quite possibly the best rockets we've seen in a game. The way it travels with the trail of smoke is cool, but when it hits the intended target? Boomba baby! Cars explode, bodies fly, the effect is tremendous, and presented in such a way that you genuinely feel the impact.

Now everyone's dead – it should be a case of strolling over to the truck and taking the heroin... right?

*Wrong.*

As we approach, the sneaky little bastard inside the truck decides to make a run for it and starts up the engine. We react by grabbing onto the truck as it pulls away – that's right, we grab onto the truck... as it's moving with our legs flying out from beneath.

We've managed to hold on... we've clambered up to the roof, and we're holding on by the skin of our teeth. All of a sudden the truck makes a sharp left. The physics of this shifting weight forces Niko to

sway dramatically to the right, but we manage to hold on and steady ourselves. Slowly but surely we edge our way to the front, across the roof of the truck, and in the exact same way *Indiana Jones* did in *Raiders*, swing through the passenger window, kick the driver out of the truck and take control of the vehicle. Oh my.

## WHAT IF...

So, in the end, we didn't walk out of Rockstar's offices per se... we floated out in a haze of giddy pleasure and speculation – and although the above scene with the heroin truck was a highlight of the demo, what lingered most as we headed back to the office was sheer possibility of it all, shaped in a series of 'what ifs'...

"What if you were in the midst of an unwinnable gun fight and you called your buddy for help, but he refused to come and help because you were late for drinks before?"

"What if you were trying to break into a car and it wouldn't start and the cops caught you in the act?"

"What if you could take Roman to a strip club instead of just a bar?"

"What if you could hang on to a helicopter, slam through the window and commandeer it like the truck?!"

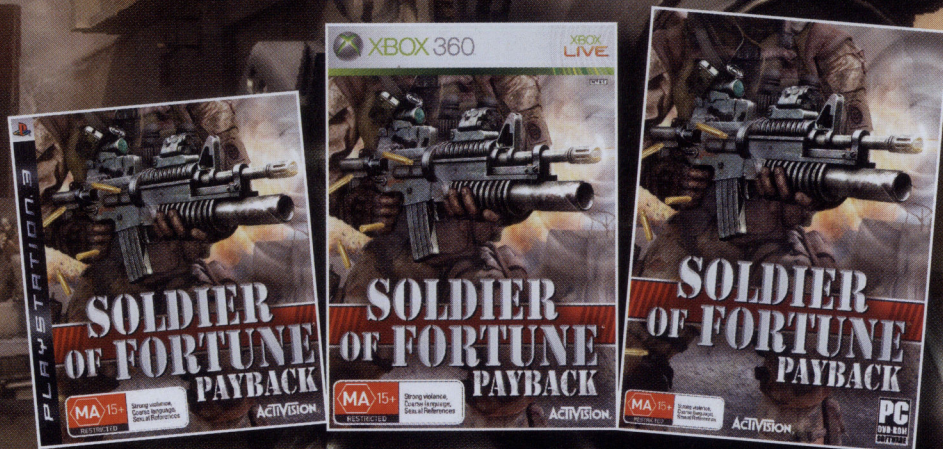
What if? What if indeed. ▀



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# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** OPEN-WORLD  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **RELEASE:** LATE 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** VIVENDI  
■ **DEVELOPER:** RADICAL ENT.  
■ **WEB:** [www.prototypegame.com](http://www.prototypegame.com)

## INFO BYTE

In an interview about *Prototype* with [gameplayer.com.au](http://gameplayer.com.au) Chris Ansell inadvertently mentioned that *Prototype 2* and *3* are already planned and may have let slip *World of Warcraft* is currently in development for release on consoles.



■ "Jesus, look at the size of that monster!"  
"That's funny, your mum said the same thing"

# PROTOTYPE

Mass-produce this bad boy pronto

**R**ockstar may have deservedly hogged the lion's share of limelight with its revolutionary *GTA* series but it's important to remember that Radical Entertainment has also been delivering successful and, more importantly, great fun, open-world games for the last half a decade. With *The Simpsons Hit & Run*, *Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* and *Scarface*, Radical has proven itself to be a talented developer with tonnes of passion for the genre. After being shackled by licenses on its previous games, Radical is taking the gloves off for

its ambitious new game, *Prototype*.

By employing a clever fiction technique, namely taking one fantastic element and grounding it in as realistic a setting as possible, Radical is aiming to ensure *Prototype* engages players on a deeper level than your average videogame. The fantastic element is Alex Mercer, a genetically engineered, shape-shifting psychopath with amnesia. The realistic setting for this anti-hero's adventure is a present day New York City that's meticulously detailed. Times Square, for example, has been recreated



■ "You're rooted!"



down to every last billboard and is filled with dense traffic and crowded footpaths. Unlike previous open-world games with practically deserted city streets, you'd almost be able to crowd surf down the moshpit-like footpaths.

Bust out some super-powered shape-shifting shenanigans and you'll see just how believably these crowds react as many run screaming in terror (some we saw were bowled over brutally by passing traffic) while others will pull out camera phones and continue snapping pictures of you right up to the point where you hack them into wet slabs of flesh with your huge Wolverine claws.

#### CLAWS YOU SAY?

You better believe it, bub. Mercer's most

effective shape-shifting ability is forming his hands into foot-long, razor-sharp metal blades. As handy as these blades are for dicing up his opposition, Mercer's far from a one-trick pony. In fact, if Mercer was a pony he'd have more tricks under his belt than the hardest working horse in Mexico's sex industry. Actually... thinking of Mercer as a human Swiss Army Knife is probably a better, and far cleaner, metaphor.

There doesn't seem to be any limit to Mercer's shape-shifting ability – any shape and texture is only a split-second's transformation away. A handful of the transformations we saw included covering his back in echidna-like spines, turning his fists into spiky maces and punching the road to send root-like tendrils under the ground that sprout ten-foot tall spikes,

## THE GREEN LIGHT

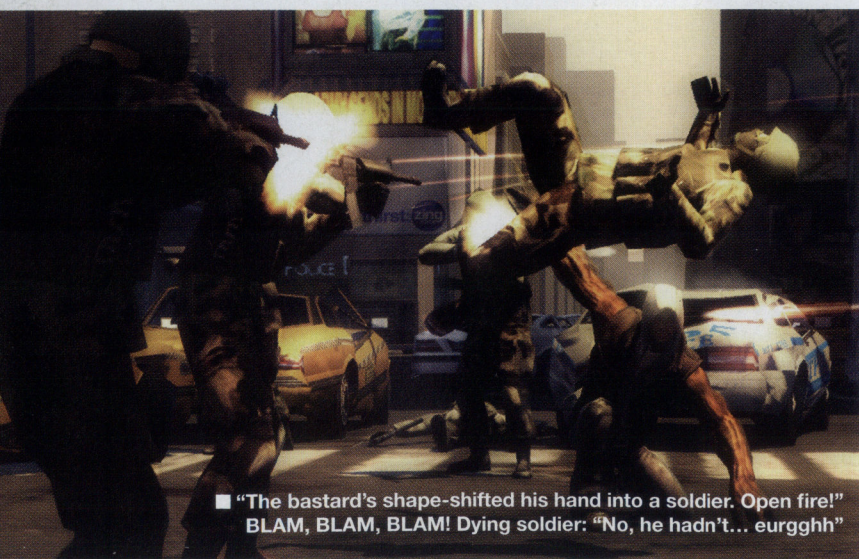


We asked Radical Entertainment's Tim Bennison exactly how he managed to get *Prototype* off the ground when exciting new intellectual properties (IP) like this are so rare.

**TIM:** That's the 50 million dollar question. We tried to build an IP around our script. We have a very experienced team. We're not trying to do an FPS that the team's never done before. We're doing an over the top action game, which we've done a couple of times before. So that's one element of reassurance we could give to the people who greenlit this project. When you're dealing with a new IP you have to accept that the standard of scrutiny is so much higher than when you're dealing with a licensed project. You have to be up for that challenge, and I believe our team was.



"Mercer's handiest shape-shifting ability is forming his hands into foot-long, razor-sharp metal blades"



■ "The bastard's shape-shifted his hand into a soldier. Open fire!" BLAM, BLAM, BLAM! Dying soldier: "No, he hadn't... eurgghh"

■ The casting session for *Extreme Makeover* was not going well...



impaling victims gruesomely on them. Fingers crossed for a smart arse "You're rooted!" one-liner after this attack.

In an obvious nod to its previous *Hulk* game, Radical's designed another shape-shift that sees Mercer cover himself in thick armour plating, enabling him to charge along, knocking aside pedestrians and traffic like a rugby forward ploughing through a team of toddlers.

To power his shape-shifting Mercer needs to absorb fresh genetic material, and since Coca Cola hasn't invented Gene Max Power Aid yet, that means doing it the hard way. After killing someone (punching a gory hole right through their chest was one effective way we witnessed) veiny tentacles shoot out of his legs and absorb the corpse into him, causing his body to ripple and change, before returning to the normal Mercer form.

#### DESTROY OR DECEIVE?

As well as fuelling his transformations, absorbing human bodies has another important gameplay effect. By absorbing people Alex Mercer also gains their skills and abilities, which are essential if you plan on doing a mission undercover. We saw this strategy employed in a mission involving destroying a military base.

To gain entrance to the base without raising the alarm, Mercer grabbed a patrolling soldier and carried him off into a small alley where he beat him to a soggy pulp, absorbed his corpse and assumed his identity. Now that Mercer had changed form without any witnesses his disguise was rock solid – the only way anyone would become suspicious is if he did something obvious like shape-shifting or opening fire on his comrades.

As a soldier Mercer is able to walk freely into the base without being challenged. The multiple ways he could destroy the base include grabbing a rocket launcher and opening fire on the building or stealing a tank and leveling it that way. The third option turns out to be killing and absorbing a General, then using his ability to order in airstrikes to call one in on the building. Considering you'll be in a city full of hundreds of vehicles, weapons and uniquely talented people to absorb, *Prototype*'s potential is clearly off the chart.

Here's a quick run through some of the other highlights we saw. Mercer's so acrobatic he can use free running to vault and jump over cars at a frantic pace. He can even run up the side of buildings AND leap off into the air, grab onto a passing chopper, pull out the pilot and fly off in it! The helicopter antics are really cranked up a notch in co-op play because while you're flying the chopper your buddy can be hanging onto the side, pulling Stinger missiles out of the barrels and throwing them manually. We love this game! **■ Narayan Pattison**

## BOTTOM LINE

- Ultra cool shape-shifting
- Focuses squarely on fun
- Visuals aren't incredible

## OPS is...

Shifting its pants





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT MONTREAL  
■ **WEB:** [farcry.us.ubi.com](http://farcry.us.ubi.com)



■ "What! The barn is on fire!? The BARN is on FIRE? My copy of *Pride and Prejudice* was in there... now I'll never find out if Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth will get together!"

## FAR CRY 2

You always take the weather with you

"Everywhere you go," claimed grizzled Kiwi warblers Crowded House, "You always take the weather with you", a fact that is pretty much undisputed, since weather is omnipresent an' all. But in the magical world of videogames? Well, the presence of weather in our treasured hobby has been limited at best. Sure we've all played/suffered through barrage after barrage of the typical platforming 'ice level', with added annoying slideyness, and maybe even noticed some basic fixed rain or wind effects, but that's yer whack.

And as cynical gamers beaten down mercilessly by the 'me too' attitude prevalent in FPS development, for some reason we expected the same ol' same ol' from *Far Cry 2*. Cool lighting effects, sharp graphics, improved AI, cool weapons, maybe even some interactive foliage ala *Uncharted* and *Turok*. We had a feeling all such manner of things would be included in this sequel, but nothing prepared us for what came next.

Remember Mike Myers' brother in *So I Married an Axe Murderer*? The one

with a head so reportedly huge that it had "its own weather system"? Well *Far Cry* is a first-person shooter so huge (50 km squared in total) that it requires it's own weather system – a dynamic weather system that is constantly in flux, leaving the player to adapt in its wake.

### EXAMPLES! I NEED EXAMPLES!

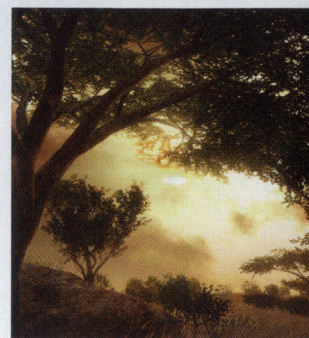
Examples? All-righty. Well, in one demo we saw the development team had pumped the wind so high that everything was affected. The long grass was writhing violently, trees were struggling to stay in their roots, and branches were literally snapping off from the sheer pressure of what was essentially a simulated hurricane within a playable game setting.

And just to confirm, this was not a cut-scene, and all very achievable via the new 'Dunia' game engine, which intends to come as close as dammit to creating an entirely realistic environment where almost everything reacts accordingly, giving players infinite options with which to approach tasks.

Cloud cover, to give another example,



■ "Hey Jeff, come and take a look at this fantastic vista, man, it really makes you feel alive, doesn't it?" (stab)





## ■ Sniper rifles: manly



## ■ "Ooh... ahh! Aiieeee! I'm so on fire right now!"



is also dynamic, leading to some spectacular lighting effects, with overcast shadows suddenly responding to bursts of light peeking through. A semi-decent reference point is the similar lighting effect used in *Assassin's Creed*, although the scope of this system seems far more controllable, and less fixed. Or dynamic – the key word when discussing *Far Cry 2* seems to be *dynamic*.

So what, you may say, the cosmetics are up to scratch – how does that affect the actual gameplay itself? Well, besides the fact that a dynamic weather system brings a previously unseen level of atmosphere to the proceedings, the reasoning behind this mechanic has spread across all aspects of the game design, resulting in a game experience that reaches new heights of interactivity.

**I BLESS THE RAINS... IN AFRICA**  
Moving out of its previous island setting,

*Far Cry 2* takes place on a huge chunk of land in Africa, with a focus on making every single part of the scenery usable within a game context.

The branches that broke off independently as a result of the hurricane can also be shot off indiscriminately. This is a game world that attempts to ambitiously mirror reality and succeeds; there is a real consistency about *Far Cry 2* that has been missing from videogaming since its inception.

Of course there's the destructible environments, the weather effects already discussed, the superb lighting, the realistic environments, but these are all just part of a sweeping attempt to create an environment that allows you to approach each mission as if it were real, outside the realms of normal videogame rules, and succeed. This looks set to be an extremely rewarding gaming experience to say the very least.

## FIRING UP

Another example – you can set stuff on fire. Really. And not the girly kind of fire you might expect from usual videogame fire, we're talking the real kind that spreads like a bastard and torches everything in sight.

Using the flame thrower, for example, to set a tree on fire, you can literally watch as the flames spread across the branches in a natural manner – and if there is something flammable nearby then it will *also* catch fire. If an enemy happens to be standing close enough to the carnage then they *too* will catch fire, and probably run around screaming like a little whiny cry-baby bitch. Idiot...

So basically it *is* viable for you to kill a troupe of enemy soldiers by burning the barracks to the ground as opposed to pumping their guts full of lead the old fashioned way.

Ultimately, as we mentioned before, *Far Cry 2* is all about dynamics, and how your actions within this world affect a delicately balanced game environment that is as fully realised and interactive as any that has come before it.

From both a visual and gameplay perspective *Far Cry 2* is an exciting prospect, pushing boundaries in every direction, demolishing expectations and (occasionally) setting them on fire.

So far the act of videogaming has been bound by a set of rules that generally don't make any sense. *Far Cry 2*, by eliminating these rules, brings gaming closer to reality than any other in its wake. We can't wait to see the results.

✶ Mark Serrels

## BOTTOM LINE

- Fully interactive world
- Set stuff on fire!
- Another FPS?

## OPS is...

Blowin' in the wind



## BURN BABY BURN...

Just from checking out these three pics you can get a real idea of just how accurate fire is being represented in *Far Cry 2*.



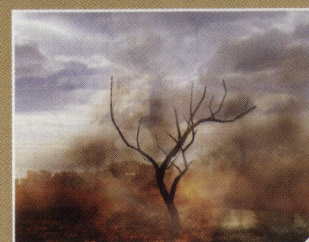
## FIRESTARTER...

Here we can see the fire in its early 'we be burning' stages. Looks like a half decent blaze...



## UP IN FLAMES...

Now it's in full fire force, completely covering the tree in its burney clutches...



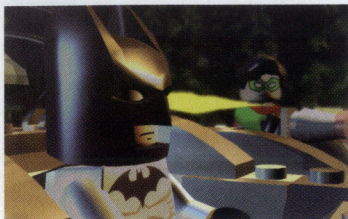
## THE CHARRED REMAINS...

Now it's nothing but a burnt out hollow of its former glory. Never play with fire kids.

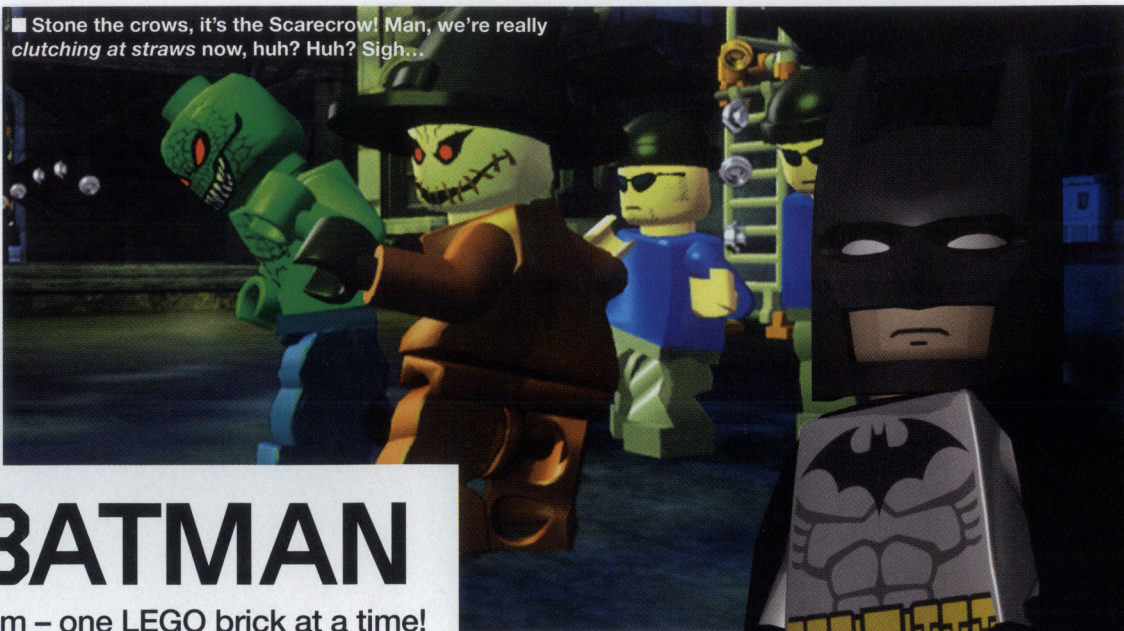


# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **RELEASE:** LATE 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** WARNER BROS.  
■ **DEVELOPER:** TRAVELLER'S TALES  
■ **WEB:** www.batman.lego.com



■ Stone the crows, it's the Scarecrow! Man, we're really clutching at straws now, huh? Huh? Sigh...



## LEGO BATMAN

Justice comes to Gotham – one LEGO brick at a time!

**L**EGO Batman? Hucking Fell – what's all this about?! What have these dudes been smoking? Surely the only time *LEGO Batman* should be said is, like, when a villain is going, "LE-GO Batman!" Because, you know, Batman is holding him and the bad guy... um, wants Batman to... let go... ah, get stuffed. You pun-hating beasts.

LEGO is no stranger to covering a much loved franchise. We had *LEGO Star Wars*, based on the steaming heap of cat poo Lucas made out of the prequels. Then, thankfully, they went back to the originals and of course you can fork out for all six movies played back to back.

That's all very good and well. *Star Wars* has a certain whimsy to it. A sense that anything can happen – and *LEGO Star Wars* put in lots of funny little vignettes – the storm troopers in the jacuzzi was a high point.

The thing is... Batman is dark. Very dark. If you read the current Grant

Morrison run, or have a gander at Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* there's nothing LEGO-ish about it. It seems, to our educated eyes, that we've got a rather odd juxtaposition. It'd be like putting a cape-wearing, cow-skull holding, sooky Goth on Bondi Beach [says the man who wears black. All the time! – Ed].

However when we saw this puppy in action it looked – to this Batfan at least – funky great. Not camp, like the TV show, but more quirky and cool like the Tim Burton version.

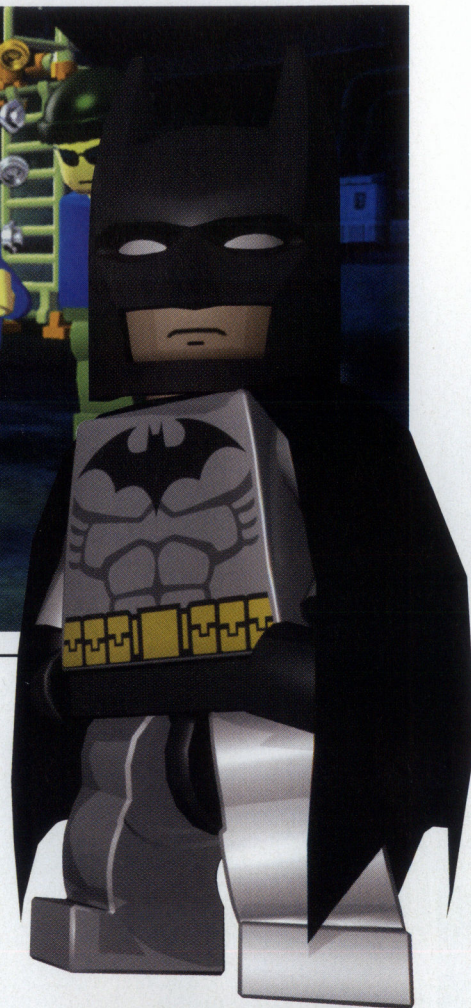
Somehow LEGO and Batman meld in a very compelling way. Plus all his enemies look great. The Joker, Two-Face, Mr. Freeze and the Penguin. But what impresses most is Gotham City. Gotham to Batman is like New York to Spider-Man or repressed homosexuality to Superman. It's part of the world they inhabit. Gotham City is as much, if not more, of a character than the titular winged justice dispenser himself.

To be honest we don't know a hell of a lot about the actual gameplay, although we don't imagine it'll differ greatly to *LEGO Star Wars*. We know there's a variety of vehicles (Batwing, Batboat and Batmobile) and Robin is a playable character – giving a lot of potential for co-op gameplay – and you also can play as The Joker and The Penguin. Traveller's tales isn't telling us how that will work, but it sounds promising.

If the city is a sandbox and you can choose to follow the Bat signal or not, if it allows Bats to glide effortlessly through the air and if the combat is a little deeper than *LEGO Star Wars*, *LEGO Batman* may be just the ticket for comic geeks who have waited a long, long time for a good Batman game.

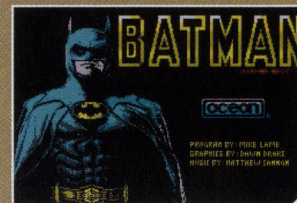
We're holding a lot of hope for this one. Hopefully we won't be forced to LE-GO. Hahahahaha, hahaha... oh God.

— Anthony O'Connor

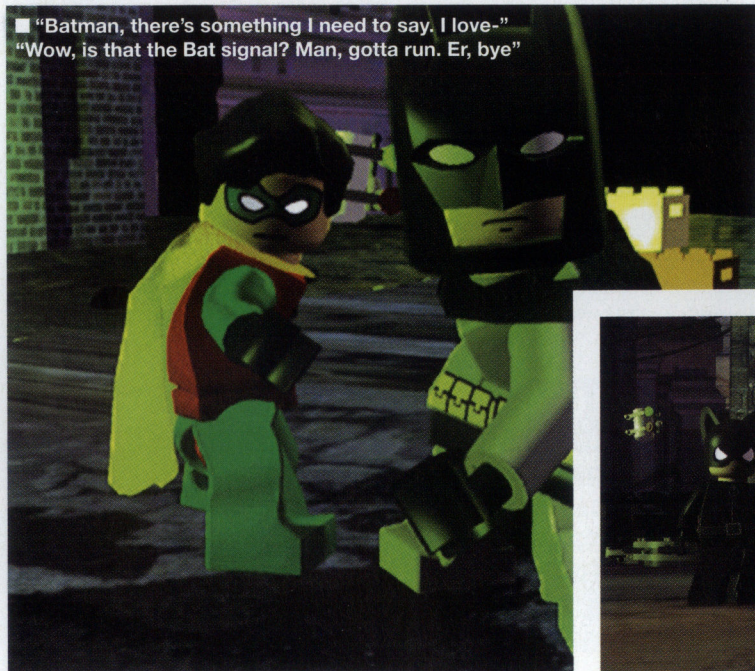


### MANY WAYS TO BESMIRCH THE BAT!

Since his first appearance way back in May 1939, the legendary Batman has appeared on pretty much every medium. Comics, books, films, the telly, nerd's underpants and, of course, games. Most of which have been horrible. And we'd know. Some of us are kinda old. We can remember the Commodore 64 version. Unfortunately, that was one of the better ones.



■ "Batman, there's something I need to say, I love-"  
"Wow, is that the Bat signal? Man, gotta run. Er, bye"



### BOTTOM LINE

- Batman is rad
- LEGO is rad
- Anthony has wet himself

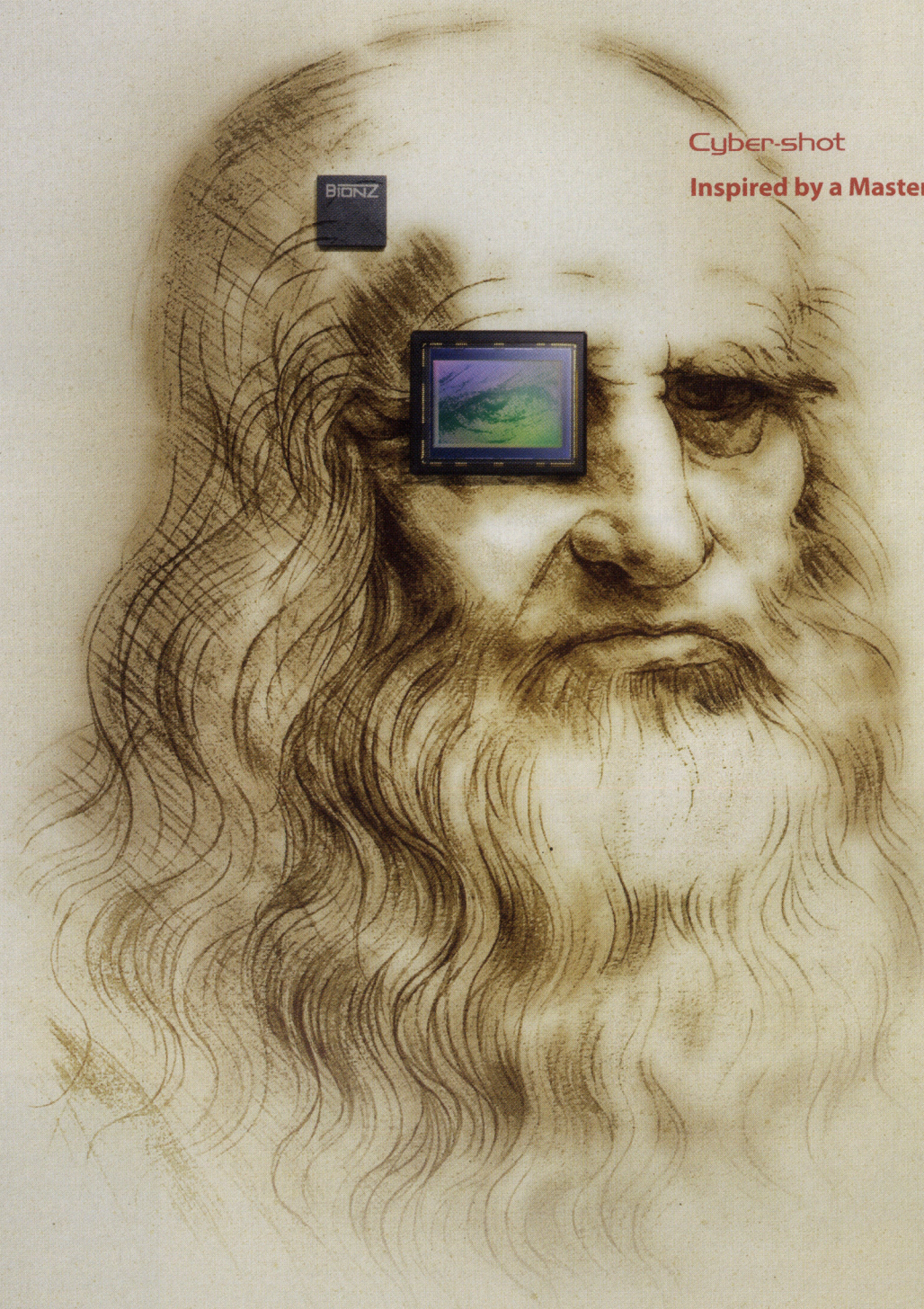
**OPS is...**  
Very confident





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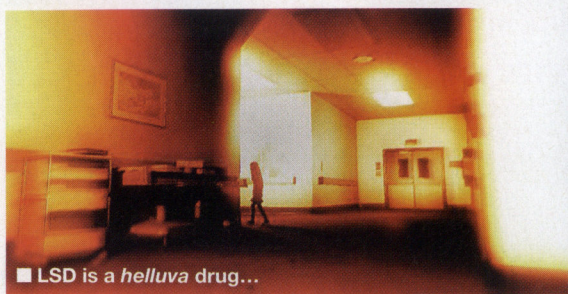
Cyber-shot

Creator's DNA



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** WARNER BROS.  
■ **DEVELOPER:** MONOLITH  
■ **WEB:** www.projectorigingame.com



■ LSD is a helluva drug...



## INFO BYTE

F.E.A.R. is a special paranormal task force. The acronym stands for "First Encounter Assault Recon" – which sounds less pansy unabbreviated.

# F.E.A.R. 2: PROJECT ORIGIN

Fear attracts the fearful for a second time...

**I**n the immortal words of Yoda: fear leads to anger, anger leads to a psychotic demon girl, and a psychotic demon girl – leads to suffering (a terror induced heart attack). Much F.E.A.R. did we sense in ourselves the first time we played Monolith's aptly titled shooter, with its blood drenched action, oppressively lit environments, and the freaky stalking antics of Alma – the aforementioned psychotic girl.

So it was with much trepidation that we agreed to check out a demo of the sequel *F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin*, with the following strict measures in place: the doors had to be locked, the lights kept on, and our security blanket had to be ready on standby.

The demonstration opened with a disturbing first-person view of a bloody surgical operation – being done on us,

unfortunately. It quickly became apparent that things were going pear-shaped, and amidst the frantic attempts of the doctors to stabilise us, our curiosity got piqued by a mysterious female voice who was instructing the doctors. The proverbial crap soon hit the fan however, and our elevated heart beat wasn't helped by rapid screen switching between normal reality and a macabre sped-up caricature of the operation with crazy butchers hacking into us. Evidently, this scene would mark the first time that we glanced nervously at our security blanket.

Things only got worse from there though (or better, depending on your horror tastes), because after we woke up alone on the slab and armed ourselves in an adjoining room; we emerged to find the surrounding hospital complex seemingly deserted – keyword:

"seemingly". Gone were the medical staff, and in their place were bloodstains, evidence of chaotic gun fire, large scratch marks, plus the occasional severed limb or head. We also noticed that our HUD displayed a replenishing shield meter – which was a welcome change from the find-the-med-kit setup of the original game, and the main character still has the ability to slow down time too – which is presumably explained by his superior reflexes, or may well be a by-product of the earlier operation.

As the demo progressed we were stalked by a nameless horror crawling through the ventilation shafts, and we were ruthlessly hunted by surprisingly intelligent squads of soldiers – who referred to us as an "escaped Delta". The ensuing gunplay was utterly gore-tastic with meaty shotgun blasts disarming people the old fashioned way

All in all our brief soirée with *Origin* told us two things; fans of the action-packed original should be very excited, and secondly the fear-factor is still present – making it a bad game to showcase to any older relatives – because they'll have a "senior moment" on your sofa, exactly like we... er... didn't. **Adam Mathew**

## LITTLE GIRLS ARE SCARY, WHO'D A THUNK IT?

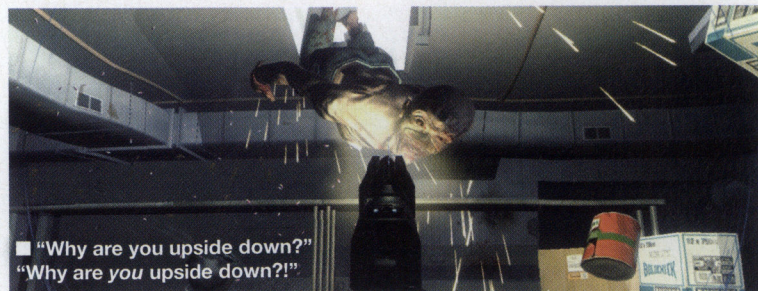
The main source of this sequel's horror will be Alma, the ghostly little girl. Basically, she is an obscenely powerful, malevolent force who has been known to effortlessly eviscerate entire Delta Force squads. While Alma has been compared to the character Samara from *The Ring* her creators have stated that she "was born out of a tradition of eerie, faceless female ghosts". Whatever her origins may be; she's right up there with those freaky ass twins from *The Shining*.



## BOTTOM LINE

- Can cook enemies
- Charlie Manson gory
- Can't sleep, can't sleep...

**OPS is...**  
Shit-scared



■ "Why are you upside down?"  
"Why are you upside down?!"



■ FPS 'skillz' – Dave Kozicki style...



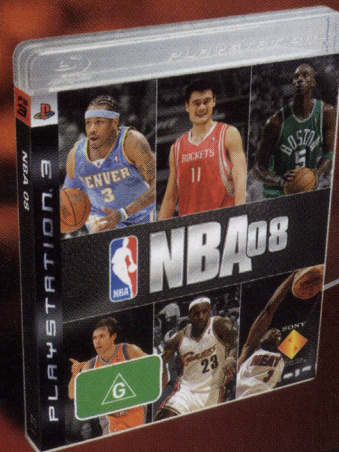
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Also available on PlayStation<sup>2</sup>. Exclusive to PlayStation  
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PLAYSTATION 3

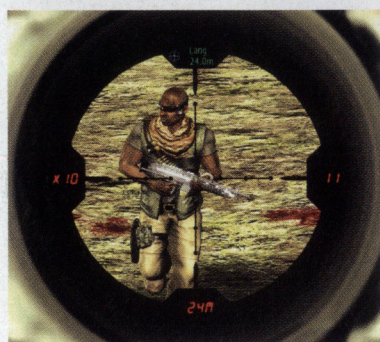


# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **RELEASE:** FEBRUARY 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI  
■ **DEVELOPER:** PIVOTAL GAMES  
■ **WEB:** www.atari.com.au



**INFO BYTE**  
This is the *Conflict* series' first foray onto next gen consoles after a well-established career on PS2.



## CONFLICT: DENIED OPS

Double your killing pleasure!



### BOOM! SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE THA ROOM!

Are too many exploding barrels ever a bad thing? See one, lock on and watch the limbs 'splode! But regular carnage is sooo 2007. In 2008 we like our barrels unpredictable, and in *Conflict: Denied Ops* that's what you get. Pop a couple of rounds into one and instead of watching it go boom, it'll shoot straight up, ever so gracefully towards the heavens and land with a resounding boom-shack-a-laca!!



### BOTTOM LINE

- 👉 Slick CG
- 👉 Vehicles and gunships
- 👉 No weapon pick-ups

**OPS is...**  
Hoping for the best



Let's face the facts here people. We've been spoiled lately. Not that we're complaining, mind you, but seriously, pick a genre and an see if the bar hasn't been significantly raised (mind out of the gutter now, kiddies). This makes it all the more simple to separate the wheat from the chaff and sends developers scurrying, looking for the next big thing (stop giggling now... really). We've been graced with some genre defining games in the last few months. *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, *Assassin's Creed*, the soon to be released *Burnout Paradise* and *Call of Duty 4* have pretty much put a nail in the coffin of many ascenders to the throne. The gauntlet has been thrown down. Can *Conflict: Denied Ops* man up to the challenge?

Terrorists. We hate these guys, they're as irritating as a crotch full of Tiger Balm. Our mates Lang and Graves feel

the same way. Who the frack are they? They're specialist members of a CIA Black Ops division that brings the pain to terrorists worldwide.

We join our heroes as they're infiltrating Santa Cecilia Monastery, in Venezuela. Lovely spot. Nothing improves a view like some dead bodies, and the fellas are more than up to the task. As our boys storm the compound you'll see the little nuances that give *Conflict: Denied Ops* a different flavour to most shooters.

Firstly, you can't pick up weapons... (pause for dramatic effect). Now, before you freak out, remember your guys are 'specialists'. Both have specific weapons. Graves favours the long shot and offers up support from a distance. Alternately, Lang likes it up close and personal with a heavy machine gun, and is a demolitions expert, so he handles most of the explosives, like C4 and grenades.

Instead of picking up fallen enemies' weapons, you need to keep them peepers peeled for re-supply crates to stock up, which should lead to some tense moments and frenetic gunplay.

In addition you can switch between characters at any time, making for an interesting dynamic that will certainly have you scratching the ol' noggin for tactics. You can rush an area as Lang dealing out a world of hurt and then switch to Graves and offer some sniper support. In our brief visit we managed to take out the terrorist cell, destroy their computer network, commandeer a tank and wipe out the stragglers with a heavily armed gunship flying in support.

We're intrigued by *Conflict: Denied Ops*. It's a break from the norm, which could provide a refreshing change from formulaic first-person shooters. We'll keep you posted. **- Dave Kozicki**



# darkSector



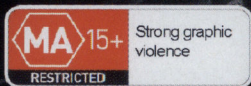
Without fear, without hope,  
without a future...

An Eastern European city on the brink of ruin. A hidden Cold War secret unleashed. A deadly, ruthless infection, creating a monster within and a hero without... Enter the Dark Sector.

Created by acclaimed developer Digital Extremes, and featuring a completely immersive storyline and cinematic style designed exclusively for next-gen consoles, Dark Sector represents the next evolution of action.



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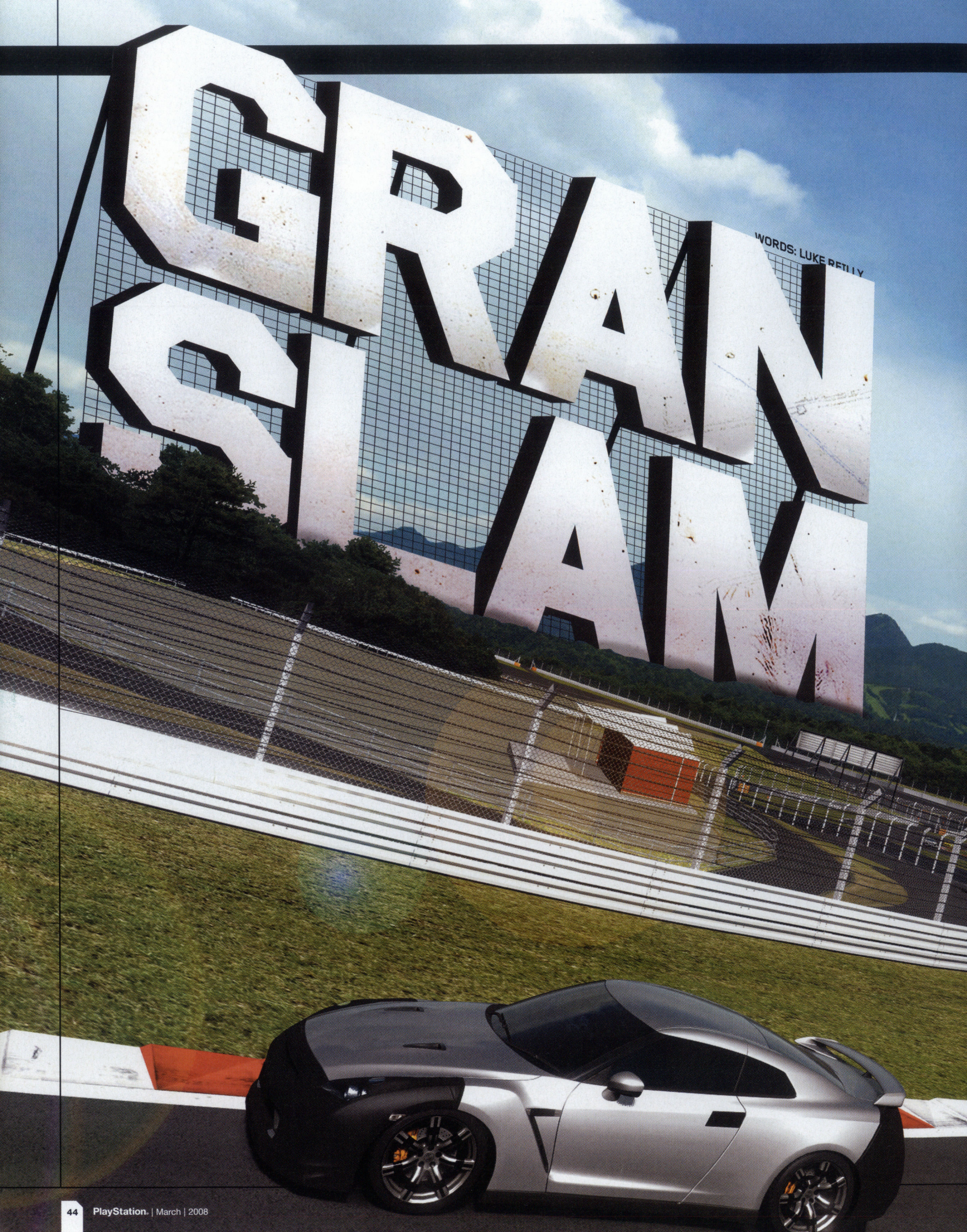
[www.darksector.com](http://www.darksector.com)



PLAYSTATION 3

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**In the original *Gran Turismo*, the creation of each individual car represented one day's work for one programmer. During development for *GT3* the time it took for a programmer to complete a car had expanded to one month. For *GT5* however? Six months. One man, one car, 180 days. If you're wondering why *Gran Turismo 5* is taking its sweet-arse time working its way into your living room – that is why.**

**W**e owe a lot to the car. The world would be a much smaller place without it. Before the advent of the car people rarely strayed more than a few kilometres from where they lived – shuffling around their cities and towns, waiting for trains and stepping in horseshit. Moreover, the car is one of man's most enduring inventions. Sure they've become much faster, increasingly advanced, more comfortable and less likely to hurl you into the nearest tree, but fundamentally little has changed. You're still propelled from one point to another, much quicker

than you could walk, by a series of tiny, controlled explosions under the bonnet. We've invented new ways to heat our food and record Oprah, but internal combustion? That's something we got right over 100 years ago.

The car is a man's cocky reply to Mother Nature. Sure, legs are neat and all – but are they fast enough? No. You can't outrun a Ferrari in a pair of Reeboks. The car is man taking evolution into his own hands. We want to go places faster than we ought to and we want to be there two minutes ago, and because it didn't appear Darwin's theory was going to bless us with cheetah-like speed any time soon, we simply took matters into our own hands.

It's Karl Benz who is generally credited as the inventor of the first true automobile. In 1885 he built a petrol-powered three-wheeler in Mannheim, Germany and was granted a patent for it in January the following year. Transport had been revolutionised, and nothing would ever be the same again. More and more engineers began to produce and sell their own automobiles in Germany, France and Great Britain.

And in 1895, a mere ten years after the birth of the modern car, a bunch of men with silly moustaches decided to race them.

*Gran Turismo*, as a result, is a celebration of over a century of dicking about in cars and seeing which is the fastest. It is the business. The original *Gran Turismo* was THE bestselling game for the

PlayStation, bar none, with *GT2* not far behind. On the PS2, the only games that sold more units than *GT3* and *GT4* began with the words *Grand Theft Auto*. We're talking over 47 million units here, and nearly 15 million of them belong to *GT3* alone. The next time somebody waxes nostalgic with you wearing their Halo-tinted glasses, it'd pay to remind them *GT3* sold more copies than *Halo* and *Halo 2* combined, and *Halo 3* hasn't outsold any of the four major *GT* titles at this stage. Yep, *GT* is about as big as it gets, and *GT5* is going to hit PS3 with the power of a runaway locomotive, driven by God.

People are going to notice.

### **PORNO CHAPTER SELECT SCREEN**

The thing about *GT5* is that you don't for a second imagine you're playing anything else but *Gran Turismo*. There have been





no real sweeping changes. Everything about *GT5* screams familiar yet refined. It retains that same Japanese quirkiness we've come to expect from the series, even the endearing bad menu muzak, inspired either by the piano lounge in a Tokyo hotel or the chapter select screen on a porno DVD – we've never been sure. The interface, even with its increased options, is vintage *GT*. It's like visiting an interstate relative – it's been a few years and they've done a few renovations around the place, but you still know how to get to the bathroom and where they keep their forks.

However, one of the biggest questions remains – how many cars will it have? The amount of tracks may be what makes a racing game truly last, but it's the amount of cars that really captures the attention of petrolheads. It's the yardstick against which all racing sims are generally measured. The more cars, the more chance there is of your personal faves being part of the garage – it's just maths. If the reports are correct (the BBC's *Top Gear* being one source – see GEARS OF PHWOAR), Polyphony

is aiming for 900 cars – a slight bump up from *GT4* (750) and a massive leap from *GT3* (150).

Granddaddy Kazunori Yamauchi is remaining tight-lipped about the roster for now, so speculation is rife at the moment. We can tell you a handful of the cars on offer from our time behind the wheel, but few will come as a surprise at this point. If you're a fan of *GT* you'll most probably glean most of what we already know from the screenshots. You'll no doubt spot the old Lotus Elise, the impossibly grippy two-seater made from Tupperware and Coke cans, and the brand-new Nissan GT-R, which, with its 7 minute 38 seconds Nürburgring time, is one

of the fastest production cars in the world today.

You might even recognise a 1960 Chevrolet Corvette, which is actually the car that won last year's Gran Turismo award at the annual SEMA motor show in Las Vegas and, as a result, the opportunity to appear in *Gran Turismo 5*.

On average, each car consists of around 200,000 polygons – 50 times more than the car models in *GT4* boasted. We don't need numbers to see just how much the visuals have improved, and nor should you, but they certainly don't hurt. The vehicle graphics are absolutely barnstorming, and it's not hard to believe each

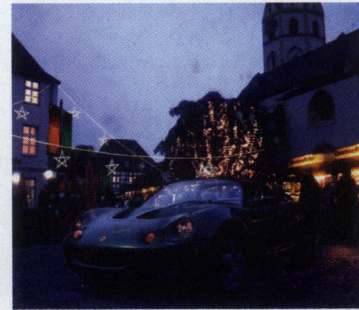
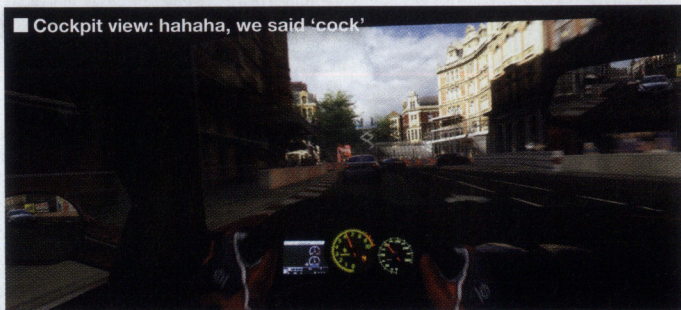
one takes a designer six months to perfect. Metal shines with uncanny realism. Alloy wheels glint in the sun. The fully modelled interiors are remarkable, so good they're distracting. When *GT* made the leap from PlayStation to PS3, fans were treated with cars that looked like the ones in the opening FMV sequences of the original *GT* titles. Now *GT* has made the leap to PS3, fans are being treated to cars that look so real you could just about sit in them yourself. The tracks look incredible too, although it's the sensational lighting that raises the most eyebrows. The London track is perhaps the best example so far with its supremely detailed, narrow streets, surrounding low-rise buildings casting scattered shadows across the track (which smoothly slide over the dash in the cabin view) and subtle over-exposure effects as you pass into harsher light.

## MANHANDLING

Under the hood any improvements are less noticeable. We're sure there have been a plethora of tweaks and physics fiddling over the past three

“GT5 WILL BE THE CULMINATION OF MORE THAN A DECADE OF HARD WORK; A PHOTO REALISTIC ODE TO THE AUTOMOBILE.”

■ Cockpit view: hahaha, we said 'cock'



## EVERYONE HAS AIDS

Driving aids. They've been a nuisance in the *GT* series for some time now. There may or may not be more of them this time around – the code we got our hands on was Japanese, but none of us are. We tinkered for a while in the options screen hoping for the best and managed to turn off most (perhaps all?) of them, which makes for a far more rewarding drive. The idea of all this traction control malarky is to keep your average motorist from losing control and disappearing backwards through a hedge, to save lives (and it does). However, it has no place on the track, or in *GT*, and if you don't disable it immediately you might as well put on a pair of oversized sunglasses, forget about all those hard-to-open jars in the kitchen and go and get yourself a \$200 haircut, because it's officially all over for you. Where's the fun in a car that won't let you spin the wheels? What good is a system that won't let you generate a little oversteer to powerslide around bends and leaves you instead ploughing into the Armco? You just can't drive fast if your car's power is being strangled by an overzealous nanny. That's like being benched by the coach for going too hard. That's our rant.

■ London baby! Minus rain and bad teeth







years, and we know there are now two levels of driving physics available, but it still feels like *GT4* to us. That in itself isn't exactly a problem, because *GT4* showcased some superlative handling chops – you really did feel like you were manhandling a real car around

a track (especially those of you with a decent steering wheel peripheral). If anything, the cars do seem as if they might be working harder on their suspension; powerful rear drive cars squat down hard under full acceleration and leap off the line, and

all of them lunge forward under heavy braking. We missed the sharp rumble as we clipped the apex of a corner, or the subtle buzz as we pulled out of a slipstream at Daytona, but that's just an unfortunate side effect of the SIXAXIS. The upcoming DualShock 3

will no doubt negate this, and if you're hardcore you ought to buy a Logitech G25 steering wheel anyway.

#### ASKING AROUND

It's easy to forget that the game we've just played, at least in its

## A DECADE OF SPEED



#### GRAN TURISMO (1997/1998)

The original *Gran Turismo* did more for serious racing games than any game since. As the best-selling PlayStation game its importance can't be understated. *GT* features arcade and simulation modes, 11 fantasy courses and around 150 cars.



#### GRAN TURISMO 2 (1999/2000)

A considerable step up from *Gran Turismo*, Polyphony stuffed 28 courses and around 650 cars into *Gran Turismo 2* over two discs. Truly massive, it's arguably a more worthy package than its better-looking but somewhat stripped-down PS2 successor.



#### GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC (2001)

The first PS2 instalment of the series (and most successful to date) boasted amazing visuals but fans spoiled by the hundreds of cars offered by *GT2* were disappointed to find *GT3*'s roster pared back to 150 and with very few older, or 'used', cars. A bit of a shame.



#### GRAN TURISMO 4 (2004/2005)

750 cars. 80 manufacturers. 50 tracks (including Nürburgring Nordschleife and Circuit de la Sarthe) – *Gran Turismo 4* is the ultimate driving simulator. The number of events and vehicles on offer, plus its incredible visuals, make *GT4* a no-brainer for car fans.



#### GRAN TURISMO 5 (2008)

The big wheel down at the cracker factory is about to make its triumphant return to the PlayStation fold. It's already being dubbed the new standard. Still, there's much more to learn – stick around over the coming months and we'll pin down Polyphony Digital for details.



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DISC TWO: \* THE DISTANCE: MAKING OF FEATURETTE WITH ALL-NEW ENGLISH VOICE CAST INTERVIEWS

\* FINAL FANTASY VII ADVENT CHILDREN: VENICE FILM FESTIVAL FOOTAGE \* NEW ANIME FEATURE: LAST ORDER FINAL FANTASY VII

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finished form, will most likely go on to become the best-selling PS3 exclusive for the console. "Bah! No way," you might scoff. Some of you, anyway. The rest of you will realise that this seemingly lofty claim isn't much of a stretch – if your memory circuits aren't failing you, you'll recall we've mentioned the most successful exclusives on PlayStation and PS2 were both GT titles.

There are still plenty of questions. Yamauchi has stated that both car damage and dynamic weather effects are still being explored, and are certainly on the agenda, but they're second place to getting the fundamentals right and crafting second-to-none visuals. He's hinted that perhaps such elements will appear further into

the future, but what does this really mean for *GT5*? *GT5 Prologue* does not feature cosmetic damage and whether such a large change could be shoehorned in at this point is doubtful. What about downloadable content and support for the game post-release? We imagine downloadable car and track packs will make regular appearances on the PlayStation Store, and reports hint that Polyphony is planning to spend another year making additional content for *GT5* after it hits shelves. Maybe it'll spend more. What about local content? Australian cars have been making cameo appearances in the series since *GT3*, and with *Race Driver: GRID* dropping our V8 Supercars championship like a bad habit, fans

down under will be dead keen for the chance to take on the world in something suitably ocker in *GT5*'s 16-player online races. We'll find out the answer to these and other questions in the coming months.


## CARBON-NEUTRAL MOOSE

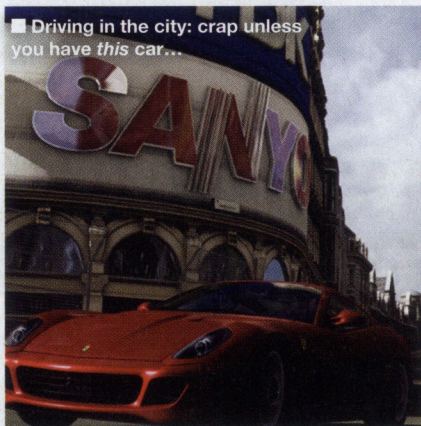
It's been 10 years since *GT* changed the face of racing sims. *GT5* will be the culmination of more than a decade of hard work; a photo realistic ode to the automobile.

Scruffy hippies and environmentalists are always quick to point at the car as the chief cause of all our ills, but we can't agree. We're all for saving the whales, the rainforests, the Great Barrier Reef and so on – but blaming global

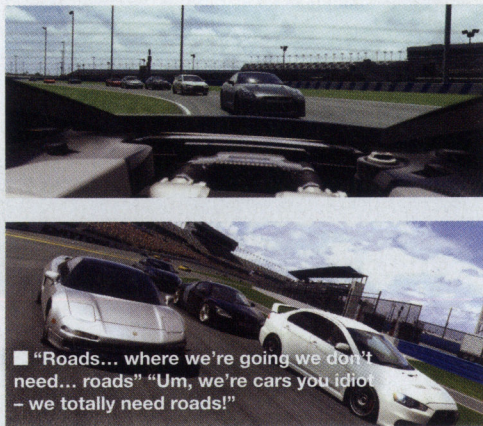
warming solely on the car is no different than blaming it on the moose. A grown moose can produce 2,100 kilos of carbon dioxide a year, roughly equivalent to the CO2 output from a 13,000km car trip. Sure, there are fewer moose than cars, but let's add cows. Let's add people. There are six billion of us. Maybe we should stop breathing?

We should definitely stop mowing our lawns. New lawn mower engines contribute 93 times more emissions than new cars.

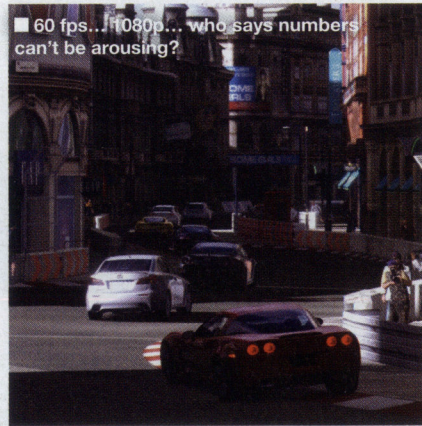
No, the car doesn't deserve so much flak. It's one of the best things we've done, and *GT5*, due out at the end of the year, is a well-deserved homage to it. And if you don't agree we don't know why you read this far. So there. 



■ Driving in the city: crap unless you have this car...



■ "Roads... where we're going we don't need... roads" "Um, we're cars you idiot – we totally need roads!"



■ 60 fps... 1080p... who says numbers can't be arousing?

## GEARS OF PWHOAR

We like to think, as far as journalism goes, we have pretty decent gigs here at *OPS*. Of course, we've never strapped an outboard motor to the back of a ute and taken it across the English Channel. Or explored whether a Lotus Exige can avoid missile lock from an Apache helicopter. Or tried to kill a Toyota Hilux by dropping an enormous caravan on it.

But there are people who have.

Motor journos-cum-TV presenters Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond have been doing this kind of thing for years on the BBC's *Top Gear* – a hilarious and quirky motoring show and one of the most pirated TV programs in the world. It's becoming so popular in Australia SBS is planning a local spin-off of the series. Not even the venerable *GT* is immune from its charm, and a bevy of *Top Gear* content will buoy *GT5*. Episodes of *Top Gear* will be available to download via GT TV and the unmistakable *Top Gear* test track will feature in the final version of *GT5*. It's not the first time *Top Gear* and *GT* have crossed paths – Clarkson

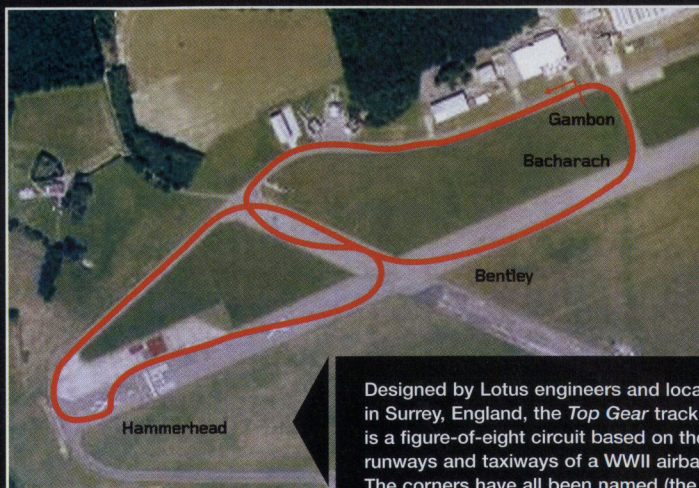
once performed a head-to-head test racing a Honda NSX around Laguna Seca in *GT4* before taking a real NSX around the real circuit. His lap times were a little off but he still had plenty of praise for it in his regular *Sunday Times* column:

"There are mistakes. The BMW M3 CSL, for instance, brakes much better on the road than it does on the screen. And there's no way a Peugeot 106 could outrun a Fiat Punto off the line. But other than this, I'm struggling: they've even managed to accurately reflect the differences between a Mercedes SL 600 and the Mercedes SL 55, which is hard enough to do in real life.

...If you take a banked curve in the Bentley Le Mans car flat out, you'll be fine. If you back off, even a little bit, you lose the aerodynamic grip and end up spinning.

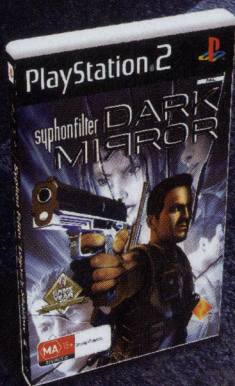
That's how it is. This game would only be more real if a big spike shot out of the screen and skewered your head every time you crashed."

Still, taking on The Stig on his home turf? We're warming up our reasonably priced car already!



Designed by Lotus engineers and located in Surrey, England, the *Top Gear* track is a figure-of-eight circuit based on the runways and taxiways of a WWII airbase. The corners have all been named (the last one, 'Gambon', after actor Michael Gambon nearly rolled his car there).





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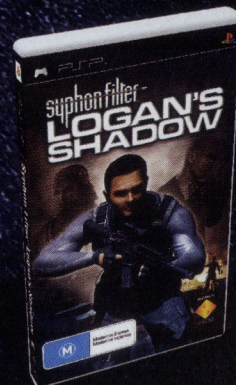


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WORDS: ANTHONY O'CONNOR

# KNOCKING DOWN DOORS

The original *Alone in the Dark* made quite a splash in the industry. In many ways it set the template for future survival horrors. The 3D world you could explore. The monsters that would find and chase you. The overall sense of creepiness – all made for groundbreaking title.

Then they made sequels. And readers, these were not good sequels. They were the kind of sequels that make you want to sit on the toilet, pick your nose and stare at the wall, weeping.

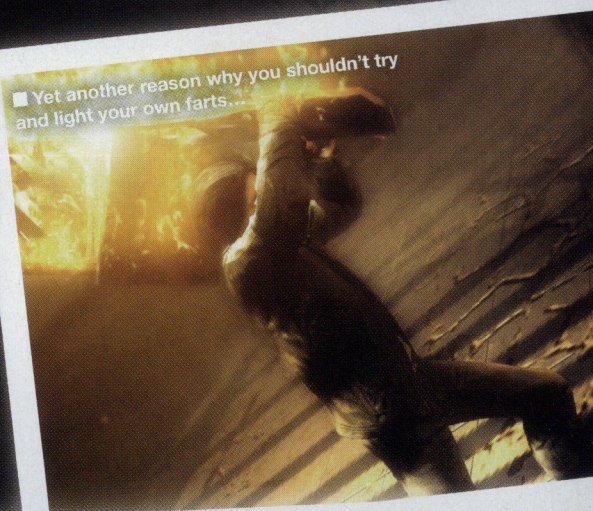
A similar reaction was had by people who saw Uwe Boll's, erm... 'movie' *Alone in the Dark* which had Christian Slater doing his Junior Jack Nicholson bit and

Tara Reid as a, wait for it, archaeologist and museum curator. Hey, she was wearing glasses! That means she's smart, right? [Mental note: buy some glasses and pretend to be smart]

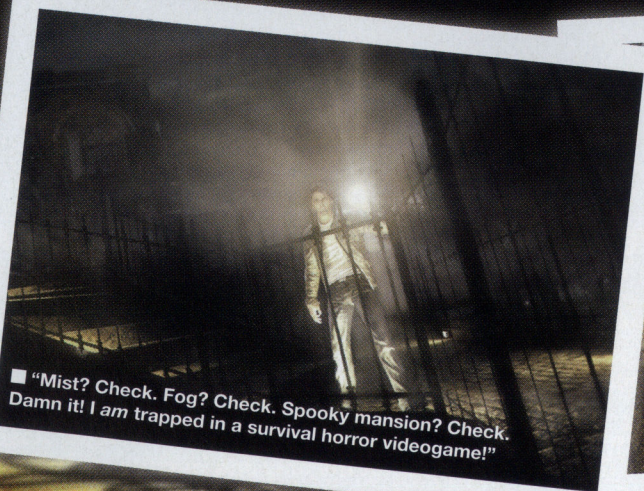
And of course we can't forget this series was up against such AAA competition like *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill* and, ultimately, *Alone in the Dark* could more accurately be described as *Alone in the Bargain Bin*.

Cut to 2008, and Eden Games is pumping the goodness back into the series. We got some talkin' time with French producer Nour Polloni (imagine her answers have a French accent) and it went an awful lot like this...

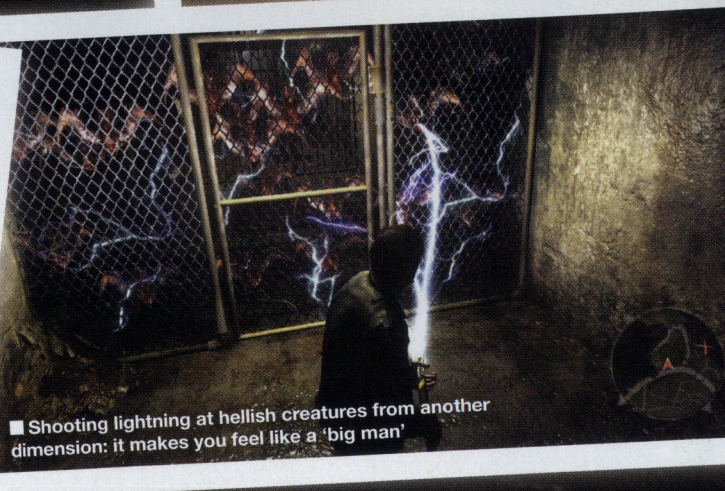
■ Yet another reason why you shouldn't try and light your own farts...




■ "Mist? Check. Fog? Check. Spooky mansion? Check. Damn it! I am trapped in a survival horror videogame!"



■ Shooting lightning at hellish creatures from another dimension: it makes you feel like a 'big man'







**OPS:** Let's be honest and get this out of the way. *Alone in the Dark* has been... sullied by people like Uwe Boll and, well, shonky sequels. What's different about this one?

**Nour Polloni:** We all loved the first one because it was completely fresh. It was innovative and original. We're trying to do a similar thing here.

**OPS:** Okay, you've got your *Resident Evil* which is kind of a mixture of visceral horror and gunplay. Then on the other hand you've got this ephemeral, bizarre and eerie tone set by *Silent Hill*. Where do you guys sit on the horror barometer?

**NP:** I would say we're more action than survival horror. Survival action, maybe? We're very different to everything that's out there. Also there's a lot of variety.

**OPS:** When you say variety, do you mean different styles of gameplay?

**NP:** Yes, you're not walking around, exploring dark corridors for the whole game. We have driving sequences, chasing sequences where something is coming after you and the story is told in the structure of a TV series.

**OPS:** That's interesting, most games shoot for a cinematic feel. How is it

more like a TV show than a movie?

**NP:** Well, with a movie you watch it – It's two hours and then it's over, and a lot of games are like that. For fifteen hours you basically go from cut scene to cut scene and then it's over. We'd like to offer much more episodic content. There'll be twists,

cliff hangers and unique moments. Yes, ultimately there is a story but the way you can get through it is completely different.

**OPS:** Can you reveal any details?

**NP:** Well, we can say as in the original you play Edward Carnby. Except it's 2008 and you haven't aged at all. And there's something going on in Central Park... but that's all I can say.

**OPS:** The game seems really open ended, can you give us an example of how this will work in game?

**NP:** Okay, you see a chair? You can

pick up that chair to smash an enemy with it. Or you can use it to help barricade a door. You can flip over a table and take the legs off to use as weapons or, if you find fire they can be burning torches. And, say you find a bottle of alcohol you can turn it into a Molotov cocktail or make a flamethrower with a can of spray and

a lighter. Basically you react and use objects in the same way you would in the real world.

**OPS:** That's quite a step for the horror game genre. How did you come to that?

**NP:** It all started with us saying we don't want the golden key to open the golden door kind of game. Every door in this game can be opened without needing to find a key.

**OPS:** Are you serious?

**NP:** Absolutely. It was one of our main rules in development – if the

door is wooden you can smash or burn it. If the door is made of metal you can bash on it until it's deformed enough to get through.

**OPS:** That's one of our pet hates. Actually it's probably everyone's pet hate. You have a shotgun and you can't open a door? Bullcrap!

**NP:** There's also a richness and an adaptive theme to the way you play the game. For example – there's a monster you have to get past. You could create a bomb out of objects you find, or throw a spray can and shoot it when it's near them so it will explode. Or, if you have a gun – just shoot it. Every player has a unique experience. We really wanted to push the gameplay mechanic, the concept of the object's interactivity.

**OPS:** It sounds fantastic. Of all these elements which one makes you the most proud, or that you think people will get into?

**NP:** I think it's the interactivity with the environment. It encourages the player to be creative – which gives you a more personalised experience. The plot has a beginning, middle and end but the way you play throughout the game is unique. We want to have people exchanging stories and sharing the things they saw. ▀

## "WE'RE VERY DIFFERENT TO ANYTHING ELSE..."



# BOURNE

## TO KILL

**Who among us can't commiserate with Jason Bourne and the curse that is the memory blank? We've all been prey to it once or twice, whether it's misplacing a favourite pen, attempting to unlock some random neighbour's house after a pub crawl or moaning a different girl's name during the festivities. Make no mistake – memory loss is a very serious condition that'll launch you up shit creek rather quickly...**

**F**urious knee to the groin from your mystery girlfriend aside; full-blown amnesia offers up far more deadly consequences when compared with your everyday, garden-variety memory blank. A fine example of this would be if you're a thirty million dollar weapon who has completely forgotten to show up for work as an elite assassin – and as a result, has been marked for elimination by an elite black ops branch of the CIA.

For the 2% of you who haven't sampled the Bourne movies starring Matt Damon (or Maaaaaatt Daaaaamon as it's correctly pronounced) you're seriously missing out on a good time – go and rent them now. To all the other smug gits

among you who have either watched the trilogy or read the original Ludlum novels, and are happily patting themselves on the back for doing their homework, kindly unhand yourself for half a second – because even you have only sampled half of the mystery that is Jason Bourne...

### **THE REAL ASSASSIN'S CREED: CHUCK A SICKIE – AND YOU'RE DEAD**

Jason Bourne was a character originally thought up by novelist Robert Ludlum and so far his amnesiac, transcontinental search for identity has spanned five books, a

**WORDS:** ADAM MATHEW

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## A MASTER IS NEVER TRULY UNARMED

Let's get the burning question out of the way first: Yes. *The Bourne Conspiracy* lets you stab someone in the fist with a pen – which is awesome. For the uninitiated, Jason Bourne often improves his odds by weaponising his environment. Pretty soon you'll be thinking like a sadistic Feng Shui practitioner as you identify objects in a room which hold potentially negative energies, like a microwave, a glass china cabinet, or a marble column – and then you'll smash people's heads through them. High Moon has created literally hundreds of contextual hotspots in every level where you can creatively interior decorate with some help from your hapless enemies.



TV mini-series, a cheesy 1980s movie, and three major motion pictures. Most of us know the character from the three recent movie adaptations, but what you might not know is that these movies branch off considerably from the Ludlum's original source material. Seeing as this new game bears Robert Ludlum's name in the title but had a teaser trailer showing key moments in *The Bourne Identity* movie plot, we were understandably confused as to where the inspiration and direction for this new Bourne videogame would be coming from. Thankfully, we didn't have to wait long for some answers; because the second we touched down in sunny San Diego we were black-hooded, bundled into black luxury sedans, and raced off to High Moon Studios HQ where we were offered a secret glimpse into the production processes of *The Bourne Conspiracy* – and better yet, some sweet hands on time with some exclusive playable code.

*The Bourne Conspiracy* is primarily a third-person action game mainly inspired by the first Matt Damon Bourne film, *The*

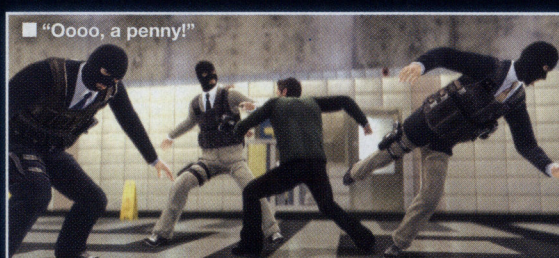
*Bourne Identity*, that 98% of us have watched in theatres. Jason Bourne, the hunted 'innocent', is relentlessly pursued by law-enforcement agencies and CIA assassins as he seeks the truth behind his shrouded past. However, *The Bourne Conspiracy* also features many novel inspired, flashback missions that draw upon the hidden mythology of the character when he was the ultimate bad-arse with bugger all conscience. This struck us as an intelligent way to tailor the license into an action game setting – because when you break it down, *The Bourne Identity* film had more frenzied escape antics than it did toe-to-toe action. What's more, despite an epic fight scene where Bourne stabs a ballpoint pen into some dude's unfortunate fist, the violence is rather sporadic with a pretty low body count throughout the proceedings. Thankfully, High Moon has taken this fact on board and has fully exploited the character's abilities to make things a tad more interesting in *The Bourne Conspiracy*, you know... violence-wise.

## HAND DELIVERING TICKETS FOR THE PAIN TRAIN

In both the books and the movies Jason Bourne is known as an exponent of a deadly martial art called Eskrima – which is Philippino for 'feed your honoured enemy his own bruised tackle' (not the most accurate translation – but we're all on the same page now). Eskrima is a vicious martial system that differs quite a bit from your usual classical forms by sacrificing esoteric crane stances and flamboyant high kicks for straight-up, economical, slapping-the-bitch-out-of anything foolish enough to be living in your field of vision – and some things that aren't.

To capture these authentic Eskrima movements and attack patterns for the game, High Moon enlisted the help of Jeff Imada, the fight co-coordinator of the new films and the man who trained Matt Damon for three months in preparation for his role in *The Bourne Identity*. The result of Jeff's input and some considerable time spent in the motion capture studio, has given *The Bourne Conspiracy* a visceral hand-to-hand combat system which often offers up some truly cringe-worthy moments when you'll disarm an opponent, dodge his retaliatory haymaker and sort him out with a leading kick to his shin, a palm strike to his solar plexus, and a dislocating snap to his gun arm – all in the space of two seconds. Très satisfying.

While most of the brutality from that aforementioned encounter can be explained to you by the deadly maneuvers; a lot of the energy comes from the way the camera is portraying the confrontation. The Bourne movies are well known, sometimes infamously so (depending on which film critic is speaking), for Doug Liman and Paul Greengrass' use of an up-close shaky-cam during the action scenes. High Moon has invested a great



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PLAYER

: GRUNT 16



FIREPOWER



STEALTH



ANGER MANAGEMENT



SELF CONTROL



SOCIAL CONFIDENCE

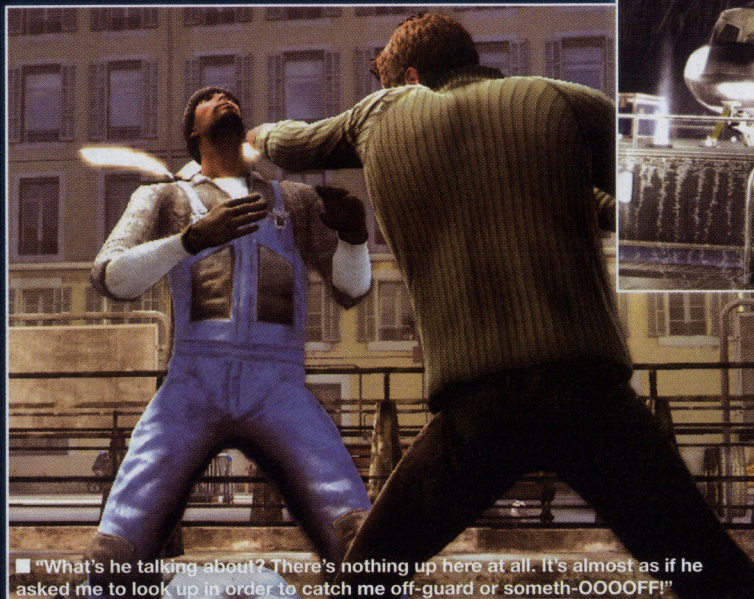


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■ "What's he talking about? There's nothing up here at all. It's almost as if he asked me to look up in order to catch me off-guard or someth-OOOOF!"

deal of time trying to replicate this style, and the fruit of its labour is something you'll have to witness in motion to fully appreciate. Essentially the camera zooms in much tighter and mimics the chaotic, kinetic motion of the two combatants as they go hammer and tongs at one another, the result of which makes *The Bourne Conspiracy* one of the most cinematic games we've ever seen. Before we sampled the demo we predicted that this new fangled camera technique might make the fighting an annoying, nauseating experience; but after playing it we were

genuinely impressed with what we saw. The only time we felt queasy was when we wrenched some poor bastard's shoulder forty five degrees in an unnatural direction.

### HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LODGE A COMPLAINT AT YOUR LOCAL EMBASSY

Our first demonstration level was based on a scene familiar to all avid Bourne buffs; the section where Jason is challenged by three security staff members in a US Embassy in Zurich. As the commotion got started, the camera glanced throughout the room and we were immediately struck by the tidy visuals of *The Bourne Conspiracy* with its intricately detailed environments, emotive character models and fluid animations.

To deal with the three marines the camera zoomed in to lock us into a close proximity brawl which we're told is the bread and butter of the 'amnesiac Bourne' half of the game - mainly due to Jason preferring not to perforate his enemies. *The Bourne Conspiracy* features a robust light and heavy button combo system which rewards timely blocking and varied four hit attacking, but thwarts repetitive

button mashers. Plus, if that isn't enough, you can charge up a power attack which will leave you vulnerable for two seconds or so before it unleashes an awesome jaw relocating roundhouse kick.

After a short scuffle we pasted the first guard with a head butt that made the civilians in the embassy audibly gasp with shock, and also had the benefit of filling up a sizeable portion of Bourne's three tier adrenaline meter. The value of this meter became quickly apparent, because as soon as our next two assailants were in range we triggered a 'Bourne takedown' manoeuvre and introduced the first guard's head to a nearby metal detector and the second victim copped a meaty back fist that knocked him out of the equation also. Before any celebratory drinks could be cracked open, four more marines appeared and our instincts told us these ones acutally meant business; firstly they were dressed in camouflage and secondly they were loading M-16s.

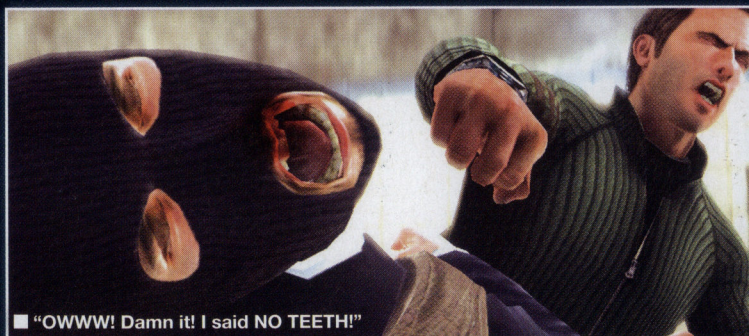
We won't spoil the rest of the experience for you, but suffice to say the level is a frantic rollercoaster ride with the camera effortlessly switching from piss bolting down hallways with bullets zinging past your melon, into quick-button sequences that have you slamming faces into photocopiers, to drawn out multi-person brawls, and back again - all with a dynamic seamlessness that's truly entertaining to watch.

### NO MERCY FOR MERCENARIES

Hammering security staff is all well and good, but rest assured *The Bourne Conspiracy* also caters for the gun nuts as well. The second level we saw showcased

### AN ELITE BRANCH WITH ASIS-SY ACRONYM?

Ever wonder what the CIA equivalent in Australia is called? ASIS was founded in 1952 and according to its website its mission is to: "Protect and promote Australia's vital interests through the provision of unique foreign intelligence services as directed by Government". Ever wondered what our nation's vital interests are? Here's a short list: beer, cricket, thongs, footy, beer, barbeques, Holdens, beer, Fords, beer, porno, etc, etc, beer. Guys, if you're reading and you require some elite field agents - we've got you covered right here.



■ "OWWWW! Damn it! I said NO TEETH!"



KillaB: Where's the DJ ?

DjDodge: Next song is called...

Crystal12: What r they doin?

Gimmy\_ya: Why r they all wearing the same?

Flowpow: Is that thing alive?

Tenniz: We'll see soon!

Sly: What would you like 2 have ?

Monkeel: 5 toffee pizza pls!

Boom33: I'll have that 2!

Kevino222: ...and on your left side u see...

Kevino222: ...the biggest carrot in the universe!

Choko45: WOW!

CraZ: How does this thing work?

FlyMoon: Push the button and we'll C?

MelleBulle: Where's my boyf?

Rush75: He was there a sec ago!

DISCO  
OPEN

Jake00: u have 76 steps 2 climb!

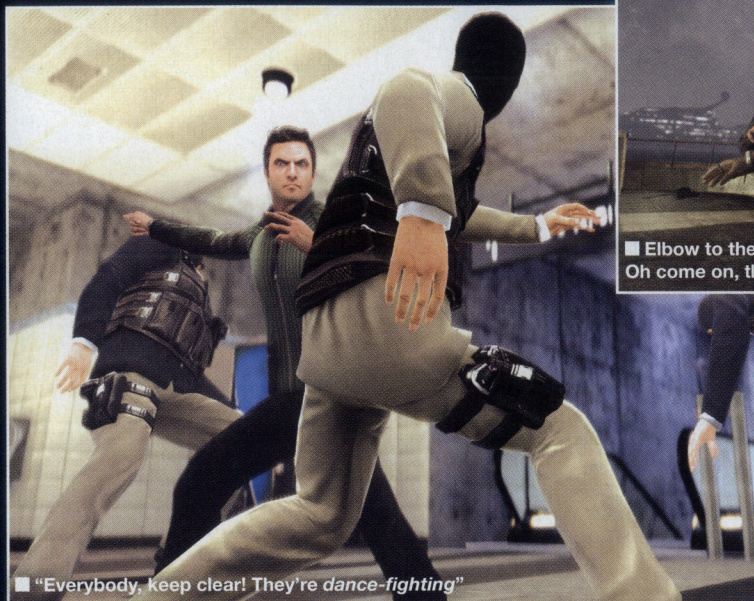
Buddy23: oh no!

THERE'S MORE LIFE AT

**HABBO**.com.au

hangout for teens





■ "Everybody, keep clear! They're dance-fighting"



■ Elbow to the face? He nose that hurts, huh? Oh come on, that was pun-*alicious*!

both Bourne as his assassin self and *The Bourne Conspiracy*'s gunplay mechanics. The mission in question occurs at an indeterminate point during Bourne's past when he was tasked by the CIA into eliminating a notorious eastern European (those perky Euros...) arms dealer.

Infiltrating via an underground train line into the target's warehouse, things felt similar to our previous embassy experience, but alongside Jason's usual assortment of attacks we now had access to an intuitive cover system similar to the one seen in *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. This system soon made itself useful too, because the train tunnel quickly exploded into a firefight with some well equipped mercenaries suppressing us from elevated cover. Ducking behind some nearby brick pylons, which started disintegrating into chunks under the onslaught of bullets, we were able to pop out, snap off a few shots with the Glock and nail an eager merc as he tried to move in closer.

Before we could draw a bead on another target someone had successfully flanked us, so with a quick tap of a shoulder button we holstered the pistol and the game seamlessly threw us back into the fisticuffs action. Twisting around this new enemy so that he became a human shield between us and the shooters on the other side of the train tracks, we served him a sidekick that sent him staggering backwards – and into the path of an oncoming freight train.

As the train continued to rush past we triggered two of Bourne's special skills to make things easier. The first was using the 'Bourne awareness' button, which has the function of highlighting useable objects, hidden ammo and gave us an instinctual indication of where the two guys should be on the other side of the train line. Once the

train had passed we triggered the second ability which was a shooting takedown – and after a quick button pressing mini-game, Jason executed both assailants with extreme prejudice.

The action continued on from here through multiple warehouses into a tense gun battle in a private airport. Once this encounter came to an explosive conclusion we were treated to a cut-scene of Bourne hitching a ride on an escaping cargo plane and an epic hand-to-hand boss fight with our mark – none of which will we spoil for you today.

## DRIVING MISS DAISY?

The third and final demonstration level was a previously unheard of section of *The Bourne Conspiracy* – a driving level based around the scene where Jason and Marie attempt to escape police in the streets of Paris. The experience was a noticeable shift away from the linearity of the previous two levels, and we had to pay close attention to our mini-map radar and keep some distance between us and our pursuers or else the threat meter would become too high and we would get automatically blocked in and arrested. Things were made easier in this regard if we triggered Bourne awareness

which slowed things to a crawl and let us navigate tight oncoming traffic, but other than that the idea was to rely on reflexes and effective use of the Mini's handbrake.

There isn't really much else to report about this particular level because it was admittedly still pretty early in development. Most of the major pieces were there; the thumping techno music, Marie screaming from the passenger seat, smashable objects on the sidewalks – but, in it's current condition the car physics seemed a touch too floaty.

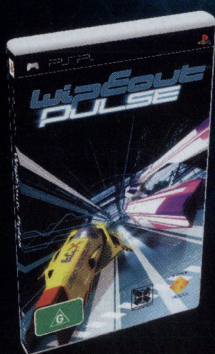
But we digress. *The Bourne Conspiracy* is still early in its development and, in truth, we're still quite surprised at how polished and playable things are looking right now. High Moon has done a successful job of recreating the energy and action of *The Bourne Identity* while carefully mixing in some of its own stellar ideas in as well. We do have our concerns, primarily with the linearity of the levels and the lack, so far, of any real exploration or puzzle elements. Voicing these concerns to High Moon we were offered an interesting explanation as to their absence; Bourne as a character has been rigorously trained to be efficient and economical, both in combat and the way he approaches his objectives. This being the case, any piss-farting around in places unrelated to his goal would negatively affect any recreation of his character.

Whatever the case, we can't deny the fact that High Moon has really nailed the look and feel of being Jason Bourne, with his raw super hero-esque abilities and the energetic way in which he is presented on screen. It's still an embryonic state at the moment; but we think the ultrasound is looking very healthy indeed and we're going to be eagerly waiting for this baby to be Bourne ...born ... whatever... ♫





wipeoutpulse.com



## ADRENALINE STARTS WHERE GRAVITY ENDS

The iconic anti-gravity combat racer is back with 12 new reversible tracks, 8 high-octane teams, new high-tech weapons, wireless & online play for up to 8 players and no less than 7 breathtaking game modes. Plus a pumping soundtrack from the likes of Kraftwerk, Stanton Warriors, Aphex Twin and Booka Shade.

WipeOut Pulse, adrenaline-fuelled combat racing.





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY PS3!

What was once a dream is  
now a mighty console. Three  
cheers for the PlayStation 3!  
**Hip-hip-HOORAY!**

**Words:** Anthony O'Connor







PLAYSTATION 3



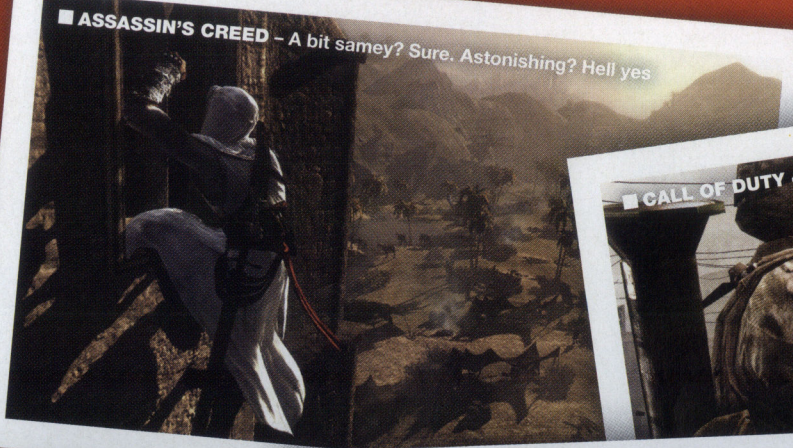
# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PS3!

## ■ MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

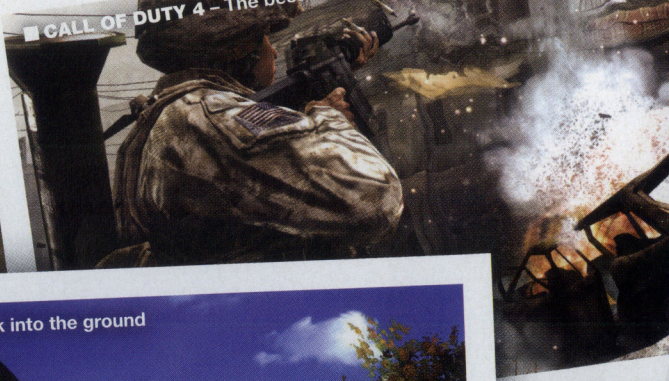
Still not too shabby, we say



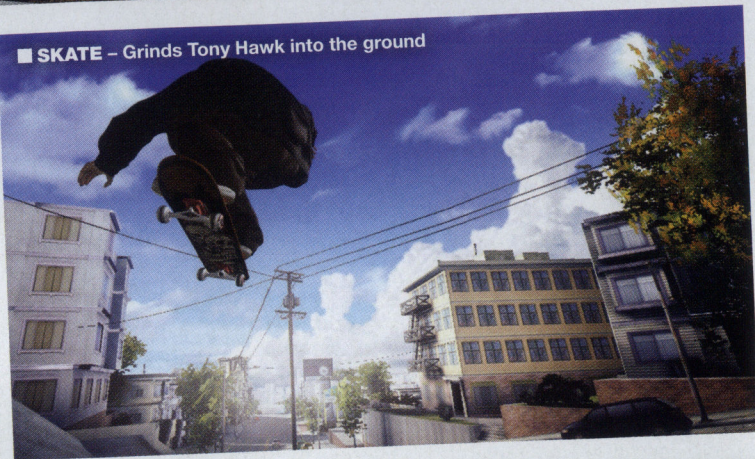
## ■ ASSASSIN'S CREED – A bit samey? Sure. Astonishing? Hell yes



## ■ CALL OF DUTY 4 – The best FPS around? You better believe it



## ■ SKATE – Grinds Tony Hawk into the ground



## THE PROPHECY

Many, many millennia ago, Druids donned dark robes and worshipped big stones and ley lines. They didn't know it at the time, but they were actually preparing the world for the PS3. Probably. We make stuff up.

"And lo," it says Big Book of Druid Stuff, "There will come a console that will rocketh most hard. But the path to this box of goodness will be one fraught with peril and yea shall many emails be senteth with frowny faces."

Anyway, gamers young and old had bulk interest in this 'next gen' machine and started saving up. Hell, it was coming out soon! November 11, 2006 in Japan, November 17, 2006 in the States so we'd be, what, like November 23?

Right? Yes? Please?

Wrong. It was a dark day when it was announced the PS3 would be delayed for PAL territories like the UK and Australia.

Surely it wouldn't be a long delay. Just, you know, a month or two?

Wrong again. Despite being ready with a handful of cash and a jaunty walk in our step the news that we Aussies wouldn't be getting the black monolith until March friggen 23, 2007 was

like a swift kick to the slats. It was like being forced to get a lap dance off your mum! It was like eating a bowl of cereal only to realise there's a drowned, giant cockroach at the bottom. It was like... well, it was bad. You get the drift.

## SHOCK AND AWWW

So the internet was abuzz with trolls claiming, "PS3 is teh suck, 360 rules!" Quite why these pasty shut-ins spend their days spitting bile onto the 'net rather than play their "far superior console", is kind of weird. We don't know about you, but we've never felt the need to troll the net and bang on about the 360 sucking. We'd much rather play a game. But that's us: kooky.

Anyway, the lack of PS3's was bad news for Sony, the PAL region and, most of all, the mag! How are we going to review games when we don't even have the bloody console?!

The answer was simple: we'd buy, beg and borrow them from overseas. We'd spend our hard earned cash for you. God we're awesome. Anyway...

## THE WAIT IS OVER

To be honest, once the PS3 did arrive it was something of an anticlimax. There weren't many games for it. It cost a lot. It could have been the death knell of a console before it even got started but thanks to two amazing launch titles – *Resistance: Fall of Man* and *MotorStorm* – people stopped and had a look. Even the naysayers gave saying nay a break. If these were the bloody launch titles – what would we have a year from then? The mind boggled.

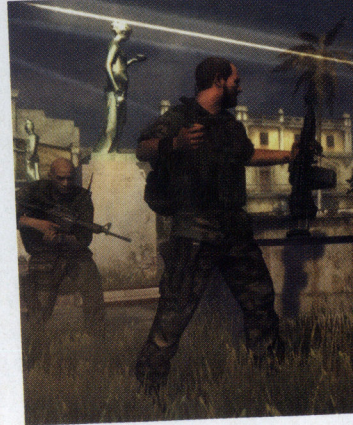
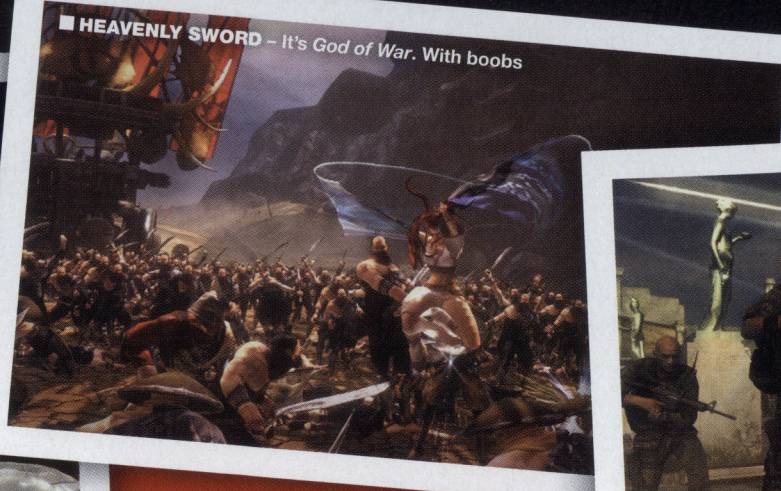
## LAUNCH TITLES: A RETROSPECTIVE

Now that we've played games like *Assassin's Creed*, *Call of Duty 4* and *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* surely the original launch titles don't stand up to scrutiny, do they? Well, that's not

entirely true. Certainly games like *Genji* look a bit crap, but *Genji* was crap when it first came out. There were some stinkers at the start – but those stinkers just stink more now. The AAA titles like *Resistance* still hold up. The fact that you get a whole bunch of new weapons on your second playthrough is as cool now as it was in March 2007. Oh, and the multiplayer! It kept getting better and better. That was because the PS3 keeps getting upgrades. It's a system in a constant state of flux. Sony hasn't just released it, shrugged, and gone down the pub. The Playstation Network really feels like a connected, worldwide phenomenon. Want some more maps for *Resistance*? You can have them, sir. What's that? More Warhawk? Right away. However, we should probably look at a few of the launch titles.

**RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN**  
– Replete with downloadable map

## ■ HEAVENLY SWORD – It's God of War. With boobs



## ■ FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3 – Pixel-perfect pugilism





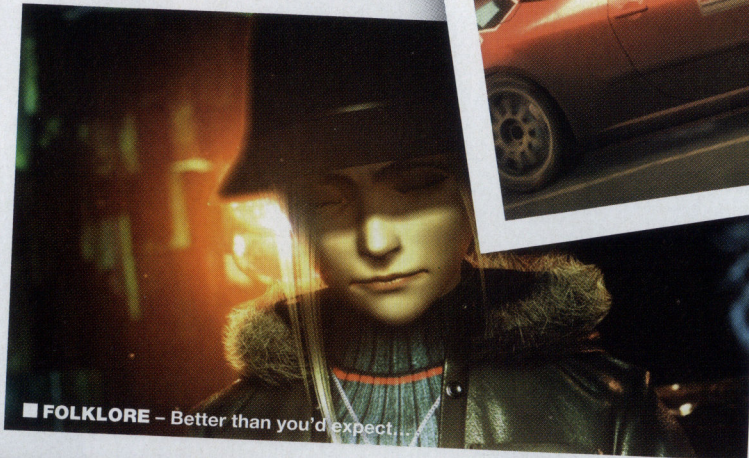
■ COLIN McRAE DIRT – A fitting tribute to a fallen legend



■ MOTORSTORM – The Burnout of rally games still tickles us all over



■ FOLKLORE – Better than you'd expect...



packs and an awesome world *Resistance* is an example of game crafting genius. You *could* call it the PS3's *Halo*, but we like to think *Halo* is the 360's *Resistance*. This is the PS3's highest selling game with over two million sold, and a sequel is on the way!

**MOTORSTORM** – Like *Resistance*, this one has a heap of downloadable content, but even just playing the game itself is a hoot. This is a car game for people who like crazy jumps, landing in mud and basically getting good and dirty.

**RIDGE RACER 7** – Unlike the previous two this one just doesn't stand up to any scrutiny. Sure it's kinda pretty, but that's not going to get the job done. We went a little easy on it because it was a launch title – but play it now and you'll see how poorly it's aged.

**MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE** – Some of you may disagree with this Marvel comic's take on a *Baldur's Gate*-style dungeon crawler but your humble, comic-book geek writer has played through it twice and is halfway through a third go. It's great if you have three mates, or even just the one, to help control your four-strong crew. Best of all are the comic book missions you can find scattered about. Play them and you'll be playing a mission, solo, that's actually based on a comic! Okay, if you didn't bristle with excitement then perhaps this isn't the game for you but it still stands up and has insane amounts of replayability.

**TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION** – Yes, based on the insanely rad PSP title this is one of the most fluid, entertaining and downright fantastic fighting games. Ever. Admittedly some of the characters are a bit crap (that kangaroo? Anyone?) but overall it is still being played today. A lot. The fact you can, via multiplayer, kick arse the world over is very cool.

## DARK TIMES

This isn't a puff piece.

You know how good the PS3 can be. But there were times, even recently, when things weren't looking so good. It's a subjective thing, but the new *Tony Hawk* game is just... meh. A pity too, because he could have brought something interesting to next gen. Unfortunately he did not. Having said that, *SKATE* is probably the best, erm... skating game. Like, ever. Once you get used to the controls it's a beautiful thing. Unlike the increasingly surreal *Tony Hawk* titles you don't have to collect coins or bright shiny things or rescue cats from trees. *SKATE* is hyper-realistic. You can actually see your feet move on the board to get ready to pull off whatever trick you're trying. It's not easy but keep at it. It really is an excellent title.

Other dud games include the wince-inducing *Lair*. Honestly it felt like the beta version of the final game. The graphics were all over the place. Your dragon looked good sometimes, while other times it looked like an airborne turd.

The game was also short, quite easy and repetitive. The textures would flicker in and out and SIXAXIS control of the dragon was... well, okay. But there was no excuse for *Lair* to be "just okay".

This brings us to possibly the most unforgivably bad PS3 game of all. *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men*. Now being a frequent visitor to the Playstation Network the fact that a lot of you like this

game is no secret.

But honestly, from the makers of *Hitman* to release this sluggish, ugly mess of a game was really a bit crap. Certain levels were moderately fun and the ability to play it co-op is a nice addition, but overall it just didn't bring it. There are worse games (*Sonic*, anyone?), but unlike them *Kane & Lynch* should have been good, but wasn't.

## GOOD TIMES

There were a few periods where it seemed like a game would get released like, once a month. If you didn't like that game you had to wait a month to buy another. This year – 2008 – is going to spoil PS3 owners with sheer volume of quality titles, but let's look back on the less obvious good games that came out in times of famine.

**FOLKLORE** – Yes, it looks girly with faeries and what not but, honestly, this is one of the finest action adventure games ever! We gave it an 8 but had we known it would get so much mini-adventures and characters to download we would have bumped that up to a 9. The combination of Japanese aesthetics with Irish mythology and one of the most unique combat systems on anything ever really rocks. The characters are wild and wacky, the bosses surreal and impressive and

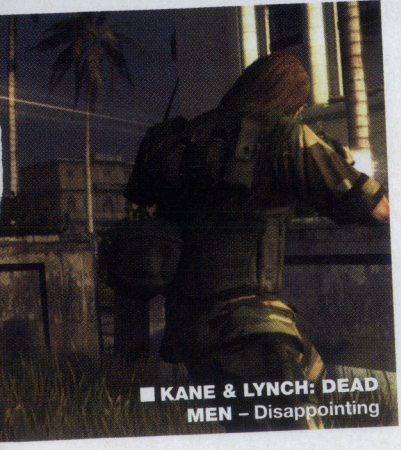
■ RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN – Kicking alien arse since launch



■ LAIR – Shit



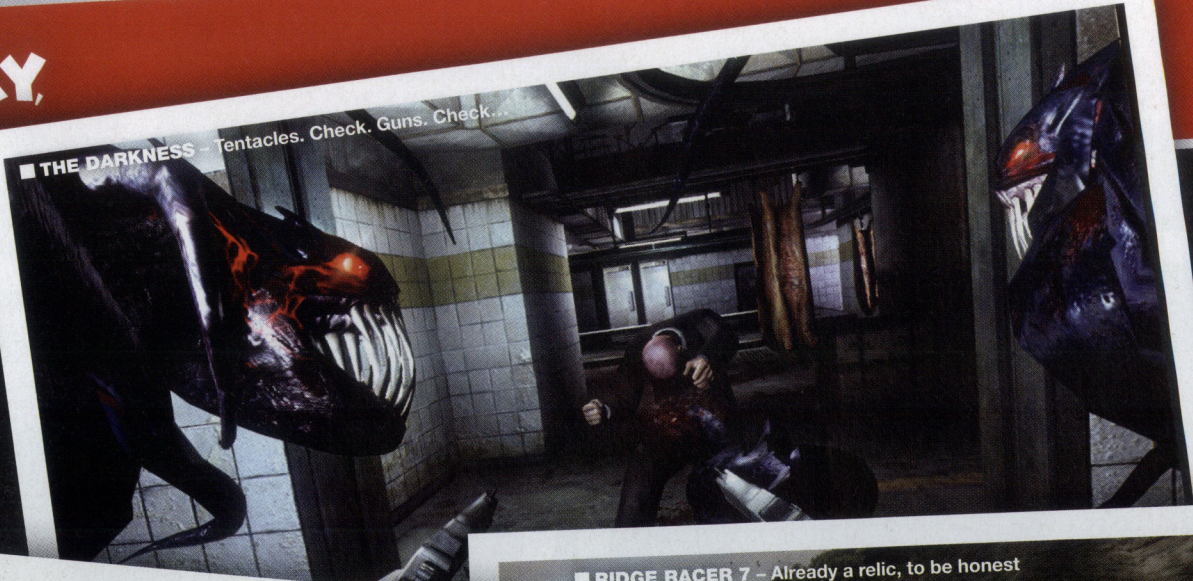
■ KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN – Disappointing



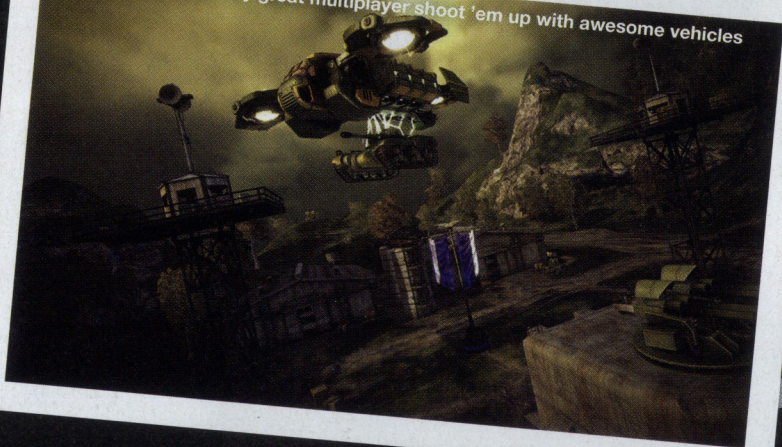


# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PS3!

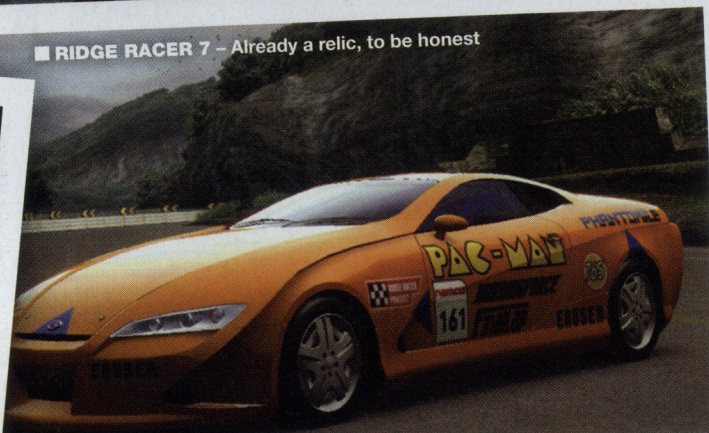
■ **THE DARKNESS** - Tentacles. Check. Guns. Check...



■ **WARHAWK** - A truly great multiplayer shoot 'em up with awesome vehicles



■ **RIDGE RACER 7** - Already a relic, to be honest



the extra content that can change the way you play the game... it's just so special. It's a slow burn, but give it a day or two and you'll be under its spell.

**STUNTMAN: IGNITION** - Took the brimming-with-potential PS2 game and made it great. Sure it's still a little frustrating but there's something very special about completing all the stunts for a movie or flying through a fiery hoop at a car show. It does get a trifle samey (some human stunts would have been nice) but overall it's tops.

There are a lot of other games that didn't capture the imagination of the punter - and that's unfortunate - but in the interest of time, and not making your eyes read too many words, we'll give the last gong to *Conan*. The game that severed a thousand limbs. Yes, sometimes

it's clunky, and it certainly lacks the polish and beauty of *Heavenly Sword*, but it's a solid hunk of gameplay, allows you to chop every limb off your enemy and has some kick arse boss battles. So much blood flies around it almost becomes comical, but other than a few ugly textures and slightly shonky animation this is really a lot of fun.

## THE PLAYSTATION NETWORK

Other than hearing from/and talking to you guys, the PlayStation Network is has many uses. You can go to the store and download trailers, demos and entire games (like *Warhawk*) at usually very reasonable prices. You can also buy add-ons and extra levels for existing

titles. Also there are lots of little time waster games like *fIOW* and *Nucleus* and *Super Stardust HD* which, while simple, become like game heroin. That is, very, very addictive indeed.

You can potter around on the 'net, play multiplayer titles and of course there's Folding@Home. We've mentioned this before but it's worthy of repeating. Simply go the Folding@Home and your PS3 will link up with others that are performing various equations and experiments that, potentially, could cure diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's. Now when your girlfriend hassles you about spending too much time on the PS3, you can shoot her a hurt bunny look and say, "But I'm saving lives!"

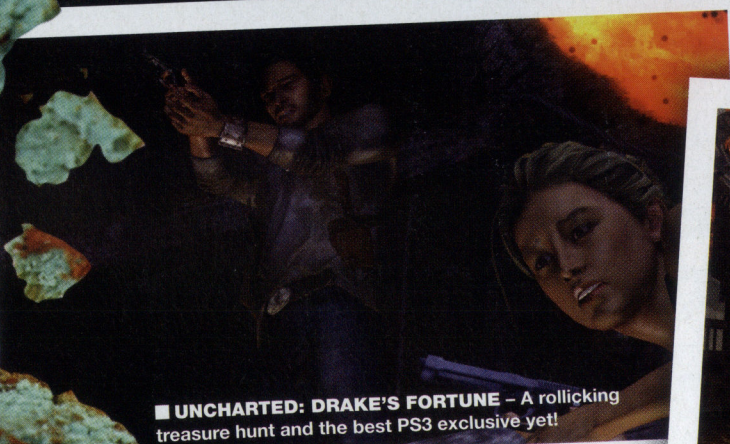
## IN CONCLUSION...

It's pretty clear that 2008 is going to be a big year for the PS3. *GTAIV*, *MGS4*, *Killzone 2*, *Rock Band* and more, and that's just the start of

the year. Don't forget there'll be plenty of games that aren't as hyped but will turn out to be belters (like *Folklore*, damn it!). The temptation is generally to look towards the future and forget about the past, but as it's early in the year we'd suggest some moments of reflection. The PS3 is powerful, most of its launch titles stand the test of time, it links you to millions of other people and, of course, when Home drops that link will be eleventy times stronger as your avatar meets other avatars and maybe gets down to some hot avatar on avatar action.

So happy bloody birthday PlayStation 3. You were the victim of some truly bizarre marketing strategies by Sony, there was a public backlash against you before you'd even been released! But now we've had time to get to know you... we... oh, we'll just come out and say it: we love you. Happy Birthday and may there be many more. Hip-hip HOORAY! ♪

■ **UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE** - A rollicking treasure hunt and the best PS3 exclusive yet!



■ **TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION** - The King of Iron Fist!







PlayStation Portable

PlayStation 2



PIMPS  
BURN RUBBER  
GIMPS  
EAT DIRT



# ATV OFFROAD FURY

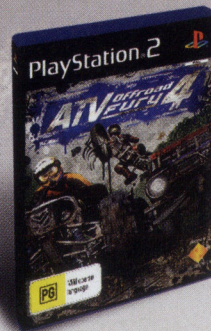
THE DIRTIER THE BETTER

It's not the winning that counts, it's the taking part.  
Break the rules, break some bones. Damage, destroy  
and demolish. Whatever it takes to be the last  
man standing.

PG

Mild coarse  
language

[playstation.com.au](http://playstation.com.au)



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WORDS: ADAM MATHEW

What games of the future need:

# MORE OR LESS

Call us cynical, but if the future was now you and we would be riding hoverboards, prowling for ultra-violence with our droogs and sipping Soylent Green slurpees – assuming we had any spare time left over from evading Terminators, chatting at the watercooler about the season finale of *The Running Man*, or chainsawing each other down at the local Thunderdome. Imagining the future, whether it's completely inaccurate and weird, isn't as pointless an activity as you might imagine; it's actually a good way to let the decision makers know what we – the great semi-washed gaming masses – want.

Looking backward some twenty five years to the days of *Pacman* and *Space Invaders*, it's truly amazing to see how far we've all come. But all of this innovation and evolution hasn't appeared overnight. It was brought about from both players and critics taking the time to meticulously overanalyze things, and tell game designers exactly what sort of new fangled improvements would be awesome – and more importantly, what elements are awful and in dire need of swift shit-canning. And it is with this important truth in mind that we offer up some truly random opinions to nobody in particular...

## Convention defiance:

If there's something we love, it's innovative games that offer us a fresh take on things – like *Shadow of the Colossus* which decided to be a string of mountain climbing boss fights. Please, stop making us insipid licensed games and cookie-cutter sequels and create something that surprises us – like an action game that gives us a plethora of weapons at the start but then has them all malfunction one by one right up until the final boss, which will have to be killed with a nearby crayon. An extreme example perhaps; but we want our future games to be new and left-field all over again.



## Split screen antics:

Most games nowadays are replacing split screen multiplayer antics in favour of online-only multiplayer modes – and it's an insult to everything our gaming forefathers suffered for. We know that online multiplayer is fantastic, but let's not take an evolutionary step backwards by being denied our single screen party fun – especially now that we can afford massive

LCD TVs and projectors. Why is the only place you'll see split screen *UT3* the fake shot to the left? Why are we being denied our split screen? Did we lose a gaming war or something?







## Comedy relief:

Hilarious games like *Portal* and *The Simpsons Game* highlighted the fact that genuinely amusing games can be made, but generally aren't. Even with all the comedic potential of games based on those amusing Pixar movies, when the last time you played something that made you piss yourself laughing at the witty dialogue? Every second blue moon we would wager. Could somebody, please, send in the clowns – or failing that, just make us *Portal 2*. Preferably sometime like... now-ish.

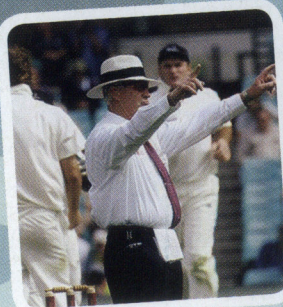


## Super breast physics:

Videogame breasts have come a long way; first they made them animate, then the next big innovation was making them bounce independently of one another, now we say it's time for breast physics to step up to the next stage of their evolution: nipple physics. What better way to believe you're 'actually there' in a chilly environment than by noticing that all the other characters are happily high beaming you. We're not being sexist here either people; all your favourite male characters would have accurate man can physics too, we suppose – if that's your bag.

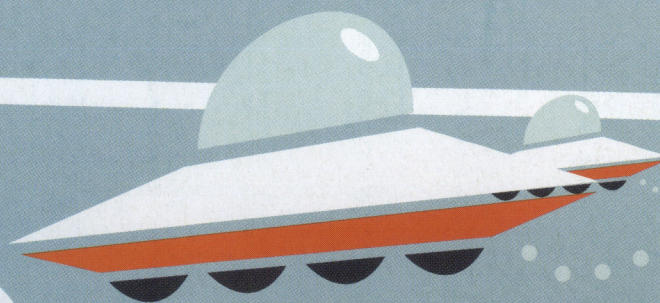
## Hard case, bearded heroes:

There aren't enough game heroes sporting beards. Whether you know it or not, the beard is manly, debonair – and it's back. Why therefore are we plagued by pansy, metrosexual, pre-pubescent protagonists then? Chuck Norris would be *ropeable*. We can understand why the beard was absent in the early days – when primitive graphics made believable facial hair impossible – but nowadays, what better way to show off your game engine's particle hair system than by giving your main character a thick, awe-inspiring beard? It's a sound plan, guaranteed to get two types of people percolating: the graphics heads *and* the ladies.



## Replay modes:

Bragging rights are a sacred and beautiful thing, and if we do something stoke-worthy in a game (with no witnesses to confirm our awesomeness) we should be able to fallback on a saveable replay function. *SKATE* has shown us how good saveable replays are, and when you add in the feature to edit said magic moment with some Spielberg-stylez it rocks even harder. Basically, we want replays for all our games now – especially *GTAIV*. That way we can all share our good times, berate our rivals, and record hilarious game glitches that detach our character's limbs and launch his arse into the sun.



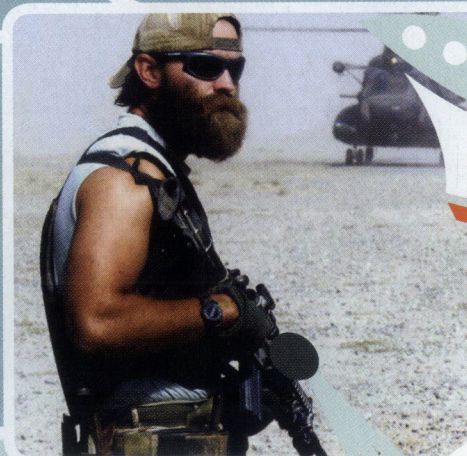
## Emotional attachment:

Movies have the ability to evoke deep emotions from the viewer, so why don't games include a bit more of that too? True, you could watch TV and make out with your girlfriend in *The Darkness*, but by and large there are only a handful of games that incorporate tender scenes in their plot. Note: before the "Pansy Alert" sounds off inside your head, consider this: when you have a love sub plot in a game, the odds of said game also including some sweet, sweet pants down action is exponentially increased – awesome interactive example: *Fahrenheit* on PS2.



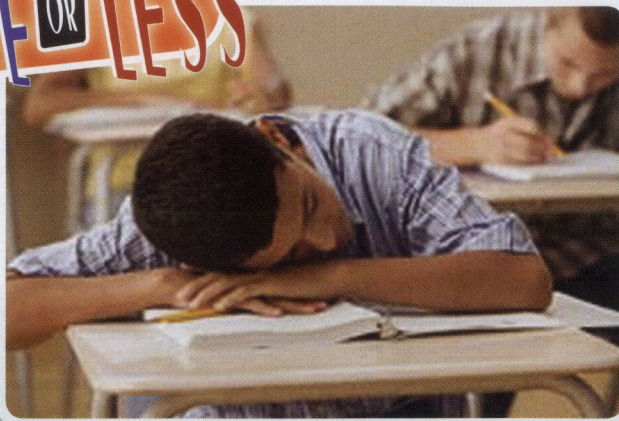
## Rendered self 'in shooters:

Ever played a shooter where you glanced down and couldn't see your legs? Yeah, it sucks. Game designers can spend many years fashioning hyper-realistic environments with flashy next-gen graphics, but really, if you can't look down and see your feet, attached to some legs, attached to a torso – then you're just a floating gun. As a general rule: all first-person shooters should live up to the term first-person by allowing us to look down at ourselves – if only to see if the nipple physics have kicked in on the blizzard map.





# MORE OR LESS



## Unskippable training sections:

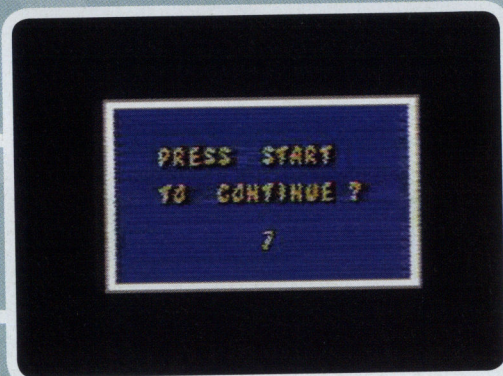
Like that annoying, know-it-all, childhood friend who wouldn't let you thrash his remote-controlled car until he'd explained every aspect of it's use; unskippable training sections are the most irritating things ever designed (yes, we're looking squarely in your direction *Burnout Paradise*) If we wanted to be forced into enduring something obvious and mind-numbingly boring we'd be in the spare room with the missus and her *Anne of Greengables* DVD boxset. Besides, if highly flammable barbeques, fast cars and firearms have taught us nothing else, it's this: real men don't need instructions – just time and comprehensive medical insurance.

## Repetitive d'ialogue:

Truly the gameplay equivalent of some random tool talking loudly on a mobile phone, AI teammates or NPC characters who spout the same old crap over and over again do not make for a pleasant aural experience. If it's an important phrase like, "Yes, sir" or, "Affirmative" record a dozen inflections of that phrase, or buy a thesaurus and exhaust every synonym you can possibly find. Future games should make voice acting obsolete by featuring computer generated voices. It's quite possible; we owned an Amiga back in 1988 that would profanely abuse family members if you typed it in. And we certainly did.

## "Press Start" on title screens:

So, the START button starts the game huh? We get it. In fact this should be the cut-off point for all casual gaming 'tards; if someone hits something other than START on an obvious title screen the game disc should explode like one of Inspector Gadget's secret orders. Also, don't just replace it with INSERT COIN instead (we once spent a whole afternoon looking for the coin slot on our Megadrive). Just for kicks we want our heads messed with by the phrase "Tap select six times to start" or "Throw the SIXAXIS across the room to begin". Mix it up people.



Tex: Take cover!

Budowski: Yeah, get some!

Tex: Take cover!

Budowski: Yeah, get some!

Tex: Take cover!

Budowski: Yeah, get some!

Tex: Take cover!

Beat

Budowski: Yeah, get some!



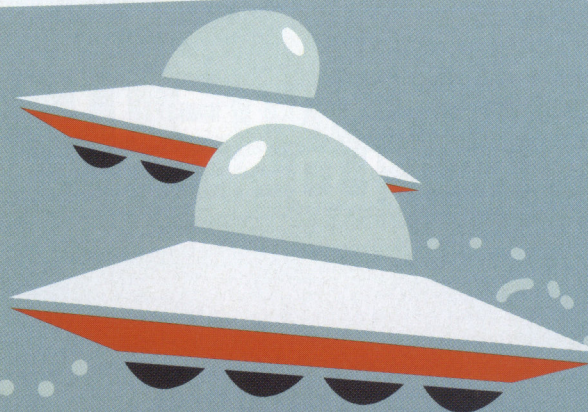
## Crap downloadable content:

Remember when you could lay down a hundred clams at your local game shop and be guaranteed to skip away with a whole game? Now don't get us wrong, downloadable content has amazing, limitless potential, but we've noticed that some companies are getting lazy and greedy with it. Hey developers, if the extra content you're offering is clever, game improving, and cheap – we'll buy it. However, we shouldn't have to shell out for the rest of a game because you deliberately only half filled the game disc – and nobody, anywhere, ever, should have to pay for cheats. There, we said it.



### Mute protagonists:

Dear game designers: enough of that, "We want the player to imagine themselves in the role" bullshit. Most of the time that's just a cop out so you don't have to spend time and money creating a backstory for your main character, hiring a decent voice actor and putting some hours in at the studio. We can appreciate mute heroes in small doses – like (the bearded) Gordon Freeman in *Half-Life*, but really, future games should give the player a voice, preferably a drunken "Serrels" Scottish accent. This complaint is void if you're making a game starring Marcel Marceau, obviously.



### Overusing gameplay mechanics:

Just like hyper-colour T-shirts, marbles, and wearing socks with sandals – bullet time, quick button mini-games, and collecting hundreds of hidden packages all had their place – but are so not cool anymore. It seems to us that interesting, innovative gameplay mechanics are being invented once every year or so before getting milked to death by a thousand copycat wannabes, and we're getting pretty damned sick of it. While we know that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, we also know that it's the sincerest form of boring the absolute shit out of the average gamer.



### In-game advertising:

Most of us play games to escape from reality for a while. This can be hard to do if we're playing a harrowing war game in a gritty battlefield environment that consists of partially bombed buildings – and a massive, technicolour Burger King billboard perched above a curiously undestroyed Dodge car dealership. From what we've seen in-game advertising enhances our gaming experience in the following ways: it kills immersion factor, it makes us unnecessarily hungry and car savvy, and – worst of all – it takes our attention away, however slightly, from much more important things – like sniping terrorists in the groin.

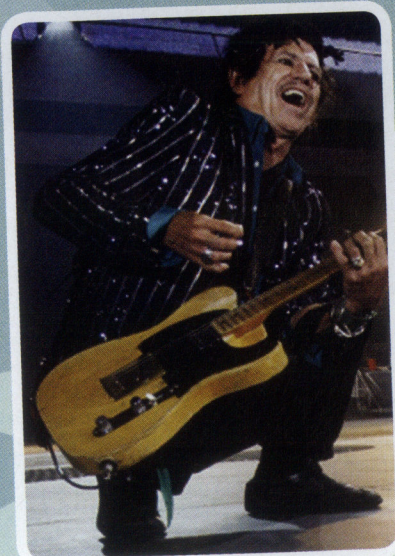
### Backtracking levels:

Blasting one's way through a massive level, when designed correctly, can be a Nirvana-like gaming experience. As a wise man once said, "It's not about the destination; it's all about the journey". This Zen philosophy doesn't work well in the reverse though, like games that force you to re-journey through areas you've already thoroughly pillaged. Granted this experience is made less tedious by having enemies jack-in-the-box from different hiding spots; but more often than not you're replaying said environment because somebody hired a bone-arsed lazy level designer. And if there's one thing we detest here at OPS: its laziness... \*cough\*.



### Dodgy SIXAXIS support:

Motion-sensing controllers are without a doubt a stellar idea on paper, but unfortunately we still haven't seen its potential harnessed fully. One particular game that featured flying dragons who-shall-forever-remain-unmentioned-hereafter professed to have revolutionary use of the SIXAXIS – but ultimately it left us cowering naked in the fetal position in the corner of the room screaming, "Nevermore". Not really, but you're getting our point. We've got this sweet technology sitting, quite literally, in the palm of our hands and it's going to waste faster than Keith Richards liver.





# WELCOME TO HELL... OR THE CLOSEST APPROXIMATION

Scream all you want,  
they like it better when **YOU SCREAM!**

**Question: what's better than winning an awesome next gen horror title that drops you into a fever dream-like, terrifying, urban den of madness and insanity?**

**Answer:** actually experiencing the thrill of real live (dead?) ghosts on a Manly ghost tour and snagging a copy of said title. *Condemned 2* is a jolting snap-kick to the cerebral cortex. It's a nightmarish meshing of horror sub-genres that will take you from gritty reality to crazed, hallucinatory terror and back again.

It's a game that uses a mainly first person camera conceit, but calling it a 'First Person Shooter' would be inaccurate. It's more a first person puncher, kicker or smack with a brick-er. Sure you get guns every now and then, but bullets are scarce and your foes are many. The good news is that you can pick up almost anything - pipes, planks of wood, rusty chunks of metal - and use it as a weapon. The bad news is that so can they. *Condemned 2* takes place a year after the

original. Protagonist Ethan Thomas is so messed up by the prequel's events he's become a sad, burnt out ex-cop. Prone to hallucinations, black outs and more comfortable in a dingy, urine stinking alley than anywhere else - Ethan just wants to drink himself to death in peace.

But, as is the way of these things, a very familiar series of murders drags Thomas, kicking and screaming, back to work with the Special Crimes Unit.

You'll have to use your forensic skills - utilising technology like the UV light (to find and follow blood trails), a camera to upload pictures of the crime scene and a device that tracks down strange emitters that seem to be driving everyone crazy. Oh, and you'll have to solve the case in the middle of a massive riot. Meth heads and PCP-crazed scumbags will come at you from every side. And those waking dreams you have; where everything is coated in black slime and monsters cackle and wail endlessly. Surely they're not real... or are they?

Part gory survival horror, part first person action and part forensic investigation - *Condemned 2* is a thundering assault to the senses.

To win the game, plus the Manly ghost tour - which is an appropriately haunting bit of real world horror - for you and a mate, simply answer the following simple question:

**QUESTION:**  
**If someone gets shot through the front of their head, what do you call the big hole out the back?**

- A** Entry wound
- B** Exit wound
- C** Itchy wound
- D** Hurt feelings

For details on how to enter the competition please refer to page 15 of the magazine, and send it to us under the headline 'Condemned Giveaway'.

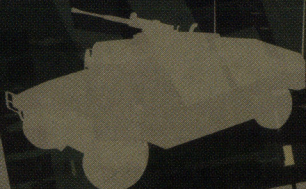
**WIN!**





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FIRE AT WILL STEALTH KILL  
FIELD OF FIRE  
BREACH STEALTH  
ALPHA TEAM MOBILE  
BRAVO TEAM GET MOVING  
MOVE OUT  
SUPPRESSING FIRE  
ATTACK TARGET



**EVALUATE. PLAN. EXECUTE.**

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK. YOUR BRAIN IS THE DEADLIEST WEAPON YOU HAVE. FOUR SOLDIERS LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS. THEY WILL FOLLOW YOUR COMMANDS ONLY. SO MAKE NO MISTAKES. TAKE CONTROL ONE OF NINE SPECIAL FORCES TEAMS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE AND TEST YOURSELF AGAINST THE BEST IN THE WORLD WITH ONLINE PLAY. OR PIT YOUR WITS AGAINST 3 FRIENDS, CLOSE UP AND PERSONAL, WITH AD-HOC MODE. HOWEVER YOU PLAY YOU MUST ALWAYS EVALUATE THE ENEMY. PLAN YOUR ATTACK, THEN EXECUTE WITH PINPOINT ACCURACY. REMEMBER, THE BEST OF THE BEST ARE IN YOUR HANDS.



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# スーパーハッピー

# 楽しい

(SUPER HAPPY FUN GAMING)

We head to Japan  
to check out some of their kookier cult classics.  
Browse through these eclectic curiosities and see  
what you've been missing out on...

## RAILFAN: TAIWAN HIGH SPEED RAIL

We're going to push this one and suppose that you've not only given *Railfan* a shot, but that you've played it to rusting point and are looking for another train driving challenge. If that's the case, this quasi-sequel based on the new Taiwan High Speed Rail network is just the ticket. It's quite a bit faster than the vanilla *Railfan*, as it puts you in charge of an export model of Japan's bullet train, which you can drive at mad speeds as you zip around Taiwan, from Taipei to the island's outer reaches, admiring the scenery while shifting gears. *Railfan: Taiwan High Speed Rail* is an excellent choice once you've mastered the original game.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## AGAREST SENKI

A strategy RPG with a romantic twist, yeah? If that's what you want, *Agarest Senki* is your game. Played out across whole continents and spanning five successive generations of an adventure-bound family, with romantic interludes and love triangles thrown in for good measure, *Agarest Senki* is an RPG like mother used to make.

It doesn't do anything new, but there is a shortage of meaty strategy RPGs on the PS3 right now, so *Agarest Senki* has found its own niche in the market. Sadly, there's no English-language option, so without knowledge of Japanese you'll miss out on some of the story and have to randomly fight your turn-based battles. Still, its conformity to type means that 'Attack' is inevitably the first item on the battle menu, 'Magic' the second, and so on. If you're desperate for some role-playing goodness, *Agarest Senki* isn't a bad option.

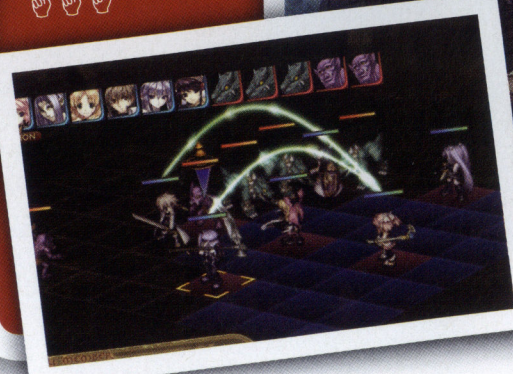
### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:







WORDS: JONTI DAVIS

## MIYAZATO FAMILY: SEGA GOLF CLUB

Not a classic, this, which is probably why it was only ever released in Japan. Yes, it's a golf game, and yes, it's made by the mighty Sega. Unfortunately, though, it looks like a tarded-up PS2 game and plays like a dog. The hook for Japanese fans is that *Sega Golf Club* stars a group of celebrity Japanese golfers (the Miyazato Family), but unless you're a die-hard Miyazato fan this game just comes across as a shoddy last-gen arcade golf 'em up. The control system is actually quite interesting, with analogue sticks used to replicate the swinging motion of real golf, but it's ultimately too fiddly and the butt-ugly visuals don't hold any appeal either. *Sega Golf Club* is stuck in a bunker.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:




### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## IMABIKISOU

Scariest game ever. That's what Sega reckons about *Imabikisou* and we're not inclined to argue. It looks like one of those mid '90s interactive movie abominations, and in a way, that's exactly what *Imabikisou* is. You get to see lots of horrific, spine-chilling scenes of nastiness, which are woven together with the thinnest of gameplay threads. So long as you keep on clicking , you'll be able to plod through *Imabikisou*, and although the whole thing is in Japanese, it's fairly obvious what's happening. Not for the faint-hearted, then, but horror fans might get a kick out of *Imabikisou*.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## PRO YAKYUU SPIRITS 4

It's not cricket, it's not even Major League Baseball... it's professional yakyuu, or Japanese baseball. The only difference between this and American baseball is that Japan uses a different word to describe the sport. In *Pro Yakyuu Spirits 4*, Konami delivers an excellent simulation of the Japanese yakyuu leagues, and for our yen it plays a much better game than the dreadfully choppy *Major League Baseball 2K7*.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:





## RAILFAN

Japan possibly has more trainspotters per capita than any other nation, and that's partly because of the sheer number of trains running on tracks around the nation, from Hokkaido up in the north to Kyushu down south. Japanese train networks are also famously efficient and well run, and in *Railfan* it's your job to see that local lines in Kyoto, Tokyo and Chicago (yep, that's Chicago in the US of A) run smoothly and on time by driving trains to their terminals, stopping off at stations to let passengers in/out and pulling up at platforms in millimetre-perfect style.

*Railfan* is nothing like other train simulators, as it doesn't use a graphics engine per se; instead, the game runs Blu-ray footage of the routes, as seen from the driver's window (or, if you like, from a hovering helicopter perspective), with a cockpit HUD to give you some sense of interaction. There's no steering involved, of course, but there's a surprising degree of challenge from having to accelerate and brake appropriately while keeping an eye on signals. If you're even remotely interested in driving a train (and really, who isn't?) we'd recommend *Railfan* as the very best example of this freakish subgenre.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## BOKU NO NATSUYASUMI 3

The latest in Sony's *Boku no Natsuyasumi* series (literally, 'My Summer Holidays') is prettier than previous versions, and there's also more gameplay here. Your time is spent with family on Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, moving between pre-rendered scenes of summer holiday idylls and mini-game interaction in the shape of flying kites, swimming, skimming stones on the river, and other happy-time forms of light entertainment. If you've ever wondered what it would have been like to grow up in 1970s Japan and spend your hols with family in the Japanese countryside, well, Sony has the answer.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## WANGAN MIDNIGHT

Anime-style racing games tend to either hit or miss. Capcom's *Auto Modellista* on the PS2 was gorgeous, but its handling rendered it a miss. Genki's *Tokyo Highway Battle* Most impressively, though, Genki's PS3 *Wangan Midnight* game manages to deliver awesome visuals and sharp handling, along with a generous helping of anime authenticity and drama. You take a maxed-out Japanese sports car to the coastal and city roads of central Japan, where you challenge other boy racers to duels on tarmac. It's an intense and thoroughly enjoyable game.

### ACCESSIBILITY W/OUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## MAINICHI ISSHO

Not so much a game as a virtual environment – and a freely downloadable one at that – Sony's *Mainichi Issho* (literally, 'Together Everyday') has been keeping many Japanese PS3 gamers entertained since the console's launch. It stars a cat called Toro, who made a big impact in Japan as the star of a series of PSone, PS2 and PocketStation games. You can listen to Toro's dialogue each day, as he chats with his roommate (another cat), and you can play mini-games for prizes that can be used to improve Toro's living quarters. Think of it as *Animal Crossing* meets *Home*, but with reams of Japanese text and a couple of funny cats. Yep.

### ACCESSIBILITY WITHOUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:



## THE TOKYO WIRE

The PlayStation Store holds a lot of Japan-exclusive content...

Although PS3 discs are region-free, PSN plays by a different set of rules. It's quite easy to set up a secondary PSN account in a territory other than Australia or New Zealand, but if, for example, you want to purchase content from the Japanese PlayStation Store, you'll be out of luck unless you have a Japanese credit card (or access to redeemable PSN cards, which are sold only in Japan). It's a shame, because there are already well over 100 original Japanese PlayStation titles available for download, including classics such as *Armored Core*, *Guilty Gear* and *Metal Slug*. Even more frustratingly for those who are on the outside looking in, all these games are selling at just Y600 (AU\$6.30) a pop. Life just isn't fair... unless you live in Japan.

## MAHJONG FIGHT CLUB: NATIONAL PLAY

It's unusual for a new console to launch in Japan without at least one mahjong game, and the PS3 was no exception. *Mahjong Fight Club: National Play* is Konami's hi-def, networked take on mahjong. The *National Play* bit of the title is a reference to the game's online multiplayer options, which enable players from across Japan (and, theoretically, beyond) to challenge each other. Even if you're familiar with the rules of mahjong, this title is a minefield of explosive Japanese text – only the brave or able will be able to get through to the gameplay, but for mahjong nuts it's a journey well worth making.

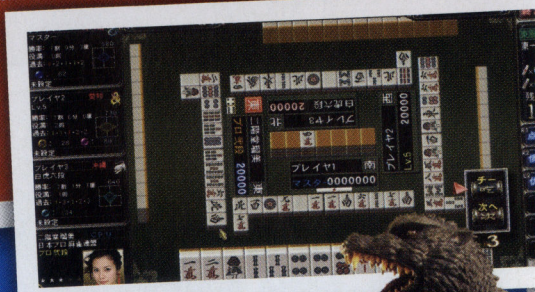
### ACCESSIBILITY WITHOUT JAPANESE SKILLS:



### JAPANESE-NESS:



### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:







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## inside everyone there's a SingStar

Microphones at the ready, the world's biggest sing off is about to begin. It's time to go head to head with your rivals. Not only does the PLAYSTATION®3 disc provide you with 30 awesome tracks for your SingStar® party but it also gives you access to downloadable tracks from the online SingStore.™ Here you can create your own SingStar party playlist, personalise your space, upload videos to share with friends – you can even watch and rate other people's SingStar performances. So find out if you're a Crooner, a Diva or even a Rocker...because inside everyone there's a SingStar.

**PG**

Mild sexual references

singstar

singstargame.com

More SingStar fun also available on PlayStation®2.

\*Broadband connection required for online features.



*This is living*

PLAYSTATION 3

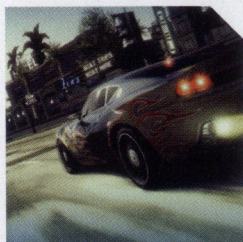


# ONLINE

The latest PS3 Network news, online reviews, reader online section and more!

## CHECK OUT...

... all this juicy online goodness



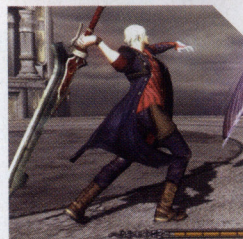
### Burnout Paradise Demo

This is truly one of the best demos we've seen thus far on the PlayStation Store, giving you an entire chunk of the game's environment to fool around in. The perfect introduction to *Burnout*.



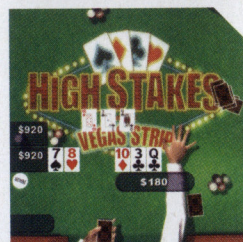
### MotorStorm Maps

*MotorStorm* has some new downloadable tracks for your perusal. Titled Eagle's Nest and Diamondback Speedway, the former focuses on mountainous hi-jinks whilst the latter is basically an excuse to drive really, really fast.



### Devil May Cry 4

Whilst *DMC4* wasn't quite what we'd hoped for, you may think differently, and this is the perfect chance to find out. Smoothness of the 60 frames per second variety makes this well worth a download at the very least.



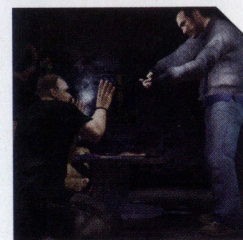
### High Stakes on the Vegas Strip

Not a game in the traditional sense, *High Stakes* is a poker sim with solid AI and sharp visuals. Online multiplayer is a boon, with online leaderboards and voice support. Fans of this in vogue 'sport' will love it.



### Piyotama

Cheap as chips puzzler with some cool game mechanics that's worth a bash at \$8.45. Despite being the exact same deal as every other generic puzzler ever made, the ginsu sharp 1080p visuals help plenty. A solid PSN title.

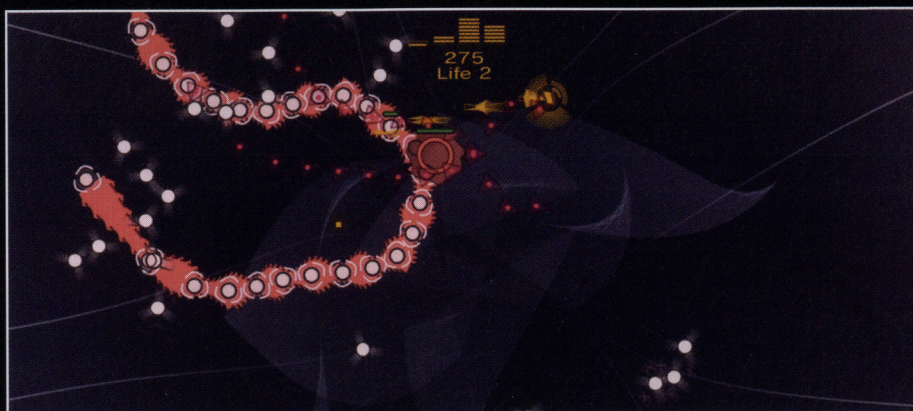


### Move up, ladies

*Grand Theft Auto's* latest trailer, 'Move up, ladies', really starts to give you a feel for the game's rich universe and the dynamics between the characters. Watch this then read our orgasmatron of a preview on page 28.

## EVERYDAY SHOOTER

You won't see something like this everyday... or will you?

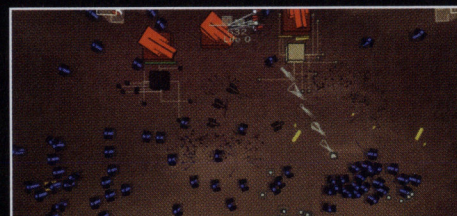


Ever since the PlayStation Store came into being we've seen a resurgence of the kind of top down blast 'em ups that used to haunt the dreams and steal the dollars of many a schoolkid in the far distant gaming past. *Super Stardust HD*, *Blast Factor*, *Geometry Wars*, it seems like one of these super hi-res twist on *Asteroid*-clones appears... well, for lack of a better word... everyday.

*Everyday Shooter* is as simple as any that have come before it. Using the left stick to move, darting between the prodigious amounts of enemies from angles, and the right stick to blast them into oblivion, *Everyday Shooter* is beyond compulsive. This, in addition to a smart chain combo system that forces you to adjust with every new level, results in a game more addictive than a caffeine flavoured Krispy Kreme sprinkled with crack cocaine.

The art design will literally make your eyes bleed, merging extreme primary colours with highly abstract, stylised enemies. It's trippy as hell, and you may just find yourself blinking a lot post-*Everyday Shooter*, but amazingly, this art style completely transforms with each level, resulting in one of the most creative games around in terms of sheer visual impact.

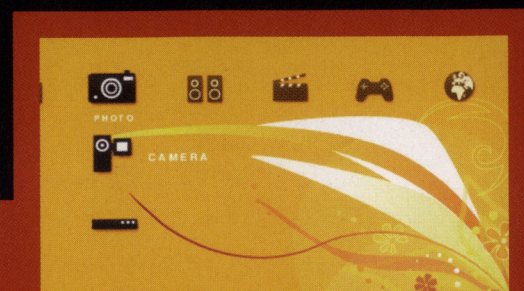
But the music is the real star here, as each level is focused upon remaining alive for the entirety of a track, whilst achieving the highest



score possible. With a twangy lo-fi guitar soundtrack, all the effects – the sounds of explosions, picking up collectables, etc. – are actually in tune with the background music, adjusting on the fly, resulting in a subtle tapestry of sound that, when combined with the acid-tinged visuals, is utterly hypnotising.

Ultimately, it's head and shoulders above the mob, standing alongside *Super Stardust HD* as one of the most compulsive and deserving games on the PlayStation Store thus far. A must buy at this almost criminally low price point.

★★★★★



## FINALLY...

Sony employee Paul Purdy reaffirmed that dreams can come true when he confirmed once and for all that new firmware in the works, due for release sometime in 2008, will finally allow gamers to access the Xross media bar (XMB) in-game.

Despite being perhaps the number one entry on everyone's firmware wishlist, Sony has been slow to respond to the need to read and send messages online without having to leave the game you're currently playing. It's undoubtedly been a pain for all PS3 owners up until this point, but it's nice to see Sony responding to fans requests.



# GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

"Wait a minute, this sounds like rock and or roll."

*Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock* has a pretty decent online offering if you're that way inclined. Each of the four different multiplayer modes available offline (Face-Off, Pro Face-Off, Co-Op and Battle) are available online. That said, you'll probably want to stick with Face-Off and Pro Face-Off – for our money Co-Op is a far better experience with a second soul in the room rather than over the web and Battle Mode is total rubbish (seriously, if we could erase it from the disc, nay from the world, we most certainly would).

The pool of potential opponents can be quite small, but they're usually all unnaturally good (too good, mostly). The game also suffers from some increasingly more noticeable flaws inherent in many PS3 online games (like the inability to voice chat or send messages the bulk of the time) but when you're up and running, it's quite fun. Relatively lag-free too, in our experience.

Our biggest problem with the online experience of *Guitar Hero III* is the downloadable content.



It really is massively disappointing at this stage. The Velvet Revolver and Foo Fighters packs were good, the free Boss Battle pack was an afterthought (unlocking a few career songs that should have been available in Quick Play and multiplayer, but weren't) but there really isn't much else. Some Journey and Boston help, but *Rock Band* already has three times the downloadable content of *Guitar Hero III*. What's the deal?

★★★

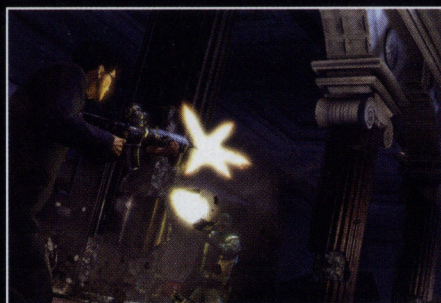
# STRANGLEHOLD

...chokes online

There's good news and bad news about *Stranglehold*'s online multiplayer. Starting with the good, *Stranglehold* has improved 100 per cent from its performance yesterday, where the game disconnected us from the server every time we tried to log in. Sadly, the bad news is that improving on a completely non-existent online mode is hardly impressive. We're glad that the servers are operational today but we were disappointed to discover that there wasn't a single *Stranglehold* game anywhere in the world for us to join.

Finding no games online is also far from being as rare as we'd like. It's beginning to seem like there are two completely different types of online games. There're the heavy hitters like *Call of Duty 4*, *Resistance*, and *MotorStorm*, each with thriving online communities and there's the rest – deserted ghost towns with more tumbleweeds than players.

And on that topic, staring at a lobby screen as the only way to search for online games is never



going to fix the problem. No one's going to bother doing that for more than a minute before they give up. At the very least, why can't you run around the multiplayer maps by yourself and kill time shooting shit up while you wait for someone to join? Or how about letting us play single-player as we wait for other players to join? Start fixing the problem, and stop expecting to generate communities with sterile lobby screens!

★

## OPS READER SECTION

Get your game on with other OPS readers

AxleF – Resistance  
BfFaLcOn\_2007 – Resistance  
bounti – MotorStorm  
dJAmZz – Warhawk  
Cam4v – Resistance  
Cosgrove – Resistance  
EBK – MotorStorm

foxmophandImama – Res  
iriquois – Resistance  
Jaz12 – Resistance  
Jase619 – Resistance  
Malifican – MotorStorm  
MrTerminator – Resistance  
Phoenixavenger – Resistance

PSIress – Res  
Shags666 – Res  
sir\_gazman – Resistance  
Stinkfire – Resistance  
tails-4 – Warhawk  
turbo180 – Resistance

**FYI**  
Please don't feel left out if we can't add you to our friends list because they max out at 50 and ours are often full.

# LOLGASM

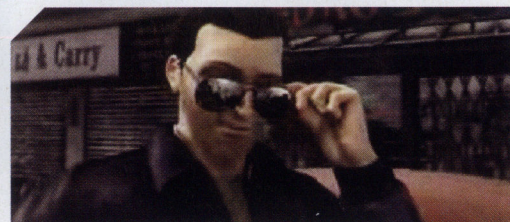


## PS3 Kid

Kid goes absolutely bananas when he finds out Santa's left him a brand new PS3 for Christmas. We're still divided on whether we want to laugh at this kid or punch him in the throat, but we can't lie: we reacted in an identical manner when our PS3s first arrived through the post...

Check it out at: [www.gamevideos.com/video/id/16878](http://www.gamevideos.com/video/id/16878)

Or Google: 'PS3 OMG Kid'



## GTA: Coke City

Yeah, so it's an ad, but funny as hell nonetheless. *GTA*-esque villain turns saint after sipping on a coke and suddenly starts doing the exact opposite of everything you're supposed to do in the game. Best bit? When he grabs a homeless guy, and instead of beating him up, hooks him up with a car full of hot chicks in bikinis.

Check it out at: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3913745262811179417>

Or Google: GTA Coke ad



## Laid Back Crash

For rabid fans of *SKATE* this is gold. You may have seen this in the online section of the game itself, but after the skater sets himself up for one of the most painful bails in history the ragdoll physics somehow manage to flip him in mid air before landing him perfectly in a seated position on a nearby park bench.

Check it out at: <http://www.maxconsole.net/?mode=news&newsid=21380>

Or Google: SKATE laid back crash



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# ROCKBAND

Rock Band  
Guitar Hero Rock Gods  
Rock Band'...

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- ▶ Burnout Paradise reviewed
- ▶ Rock Band tours Australia
- ▶ World of Warcraft on PS3
- ▶ Blu-ray wins hi-def war
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- ▶ PS3 sales blow Xbox 360
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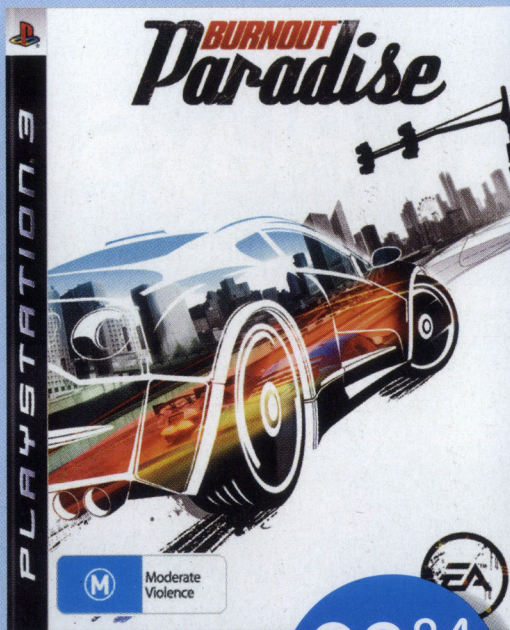


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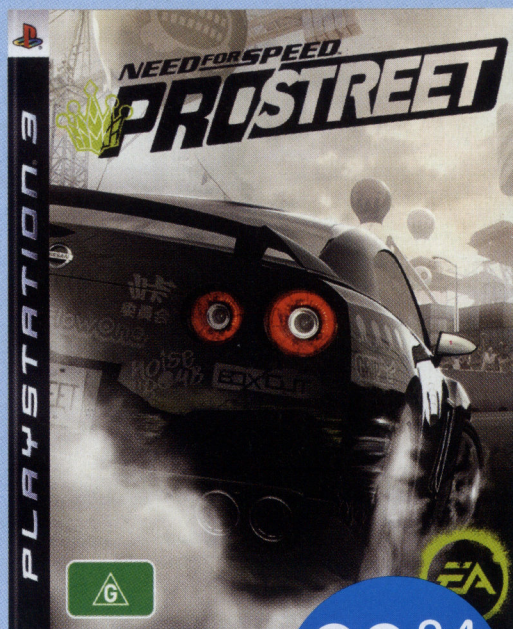
**78<sup>83</sup>**  
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE



**93<sup>84</sup>**  
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE



**93<sup>84</sup>**  
AVAILABLE 13/3



**93<sup>84</sup>**  
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# REVIEWS

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## REVIEW RATINGS

**01** Reserved for the very worst that developers have to offer.

Essentially, anything that receives this score has no redeeming qualities whatsoever. A game receiving this score could not possibly be any worse, unless it was broken from the outset (or gave you cancer, or killed your dog). A game that should never have even survived its first pitch – as bad as it gets.

**02** A terrible, terrible game. There may be one or two

things about this game that work, or aren't actually broken, but they are so hopelessly outnumbered by the sheer quantity of badness that they basically cease to exist. Maybe it has a clever name, maybe the concept was sound – but virtually every single thing about it is bad beyond belief. Not worth the effort.

**03** Very disappointing. A game with this score is

fundamentally flawed in a number of extremely vital ways. There may be one or two things that could've been done somewhat worse than they have been, but for most part it's totally uninspired, boring and unappealing in every way. There are games that are worse, but there's not that many.

**04** Poor. There may be parts of this game that are

vaguely fun, and it may be robust enough in a few departments, but the overall package is lacking any significant reason to stick it out. Games receiving this score may show initial promise, or sound good at first, but will be unrefined, undercooked and let down by shoddy execution and poor attention to detail.

**05** Mediocre. In the strictest terms, 50% is a pass – just.

Unfortunately, a game receiving this score will have had just as many things go wrong with it as go right, and that really isn't enough to succeed. A game receiving this score will probably be entertaining in parts without excelling anywhere, yet equally sub-par in others without being outright awful.

**06** Decent enough, although still lacking a certain

something. A game receiving this score will be sound, but will have some fairly glaring faults and your interest will probably wane pretty quickly. It will have a number of limitations that will probably turn off more than a few gamers, but will get just enough right to keep dedicated fans of the genre ploughing through.

**07** Good. A robust, fun game that's well worth a look,

although will only rarely amaze. A game receiving this score will have more or less accomplished nearly all it set out to do in a decent fashion, but it will have some noticeable problems that prevent it from being as good as it could be. Nevertheless, they generally won't ruin the overall gaming experience.

**08** Great. A game receiving this score comes highly

recommended. A combination of some odd issues, minor problems or a lack of innovation may hamper it somewhat, but the overall impression it leaves it very positive. Very entertaining, very satisfying and you wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to others. Well ahead of the pack in most departments.

**09** Excellent. Outstanding in almost every way.

Some negligible blemishes will just keep it from being held aloft as a true masterpiece, but it is very likely the best in its field. Most elements of this game will be truly remarkable and you'll be hard-pressed to find too many other games of greater quality. An astonishing game that leaves all but the very best behind.

**10** Incredible. Everything went right during the creation of this game.

A game receiving a perfect 10 does not necessarily mean it is perfect, likely just teasingly close, but to reserve 10s for THE perfect game is pointless. Instead, a 10 represents a game of gobsmacking brilliance, a game that stands high above the rest and a game that you cannot afford to ignore. A masterpiece.

## THE OPS AWARDS



**The Gold Award**  
is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



**The Silver Award**  
is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



**The Bronze Award**  
is for games that receive 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

## OPS REVIEW SETUP



We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs...

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■ **FIFA Street 3**

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■ **Disgaea: Afternoon of Darkness (PSP)**  
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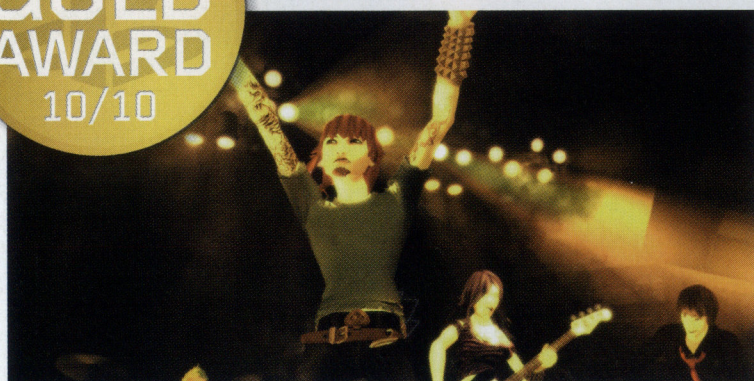
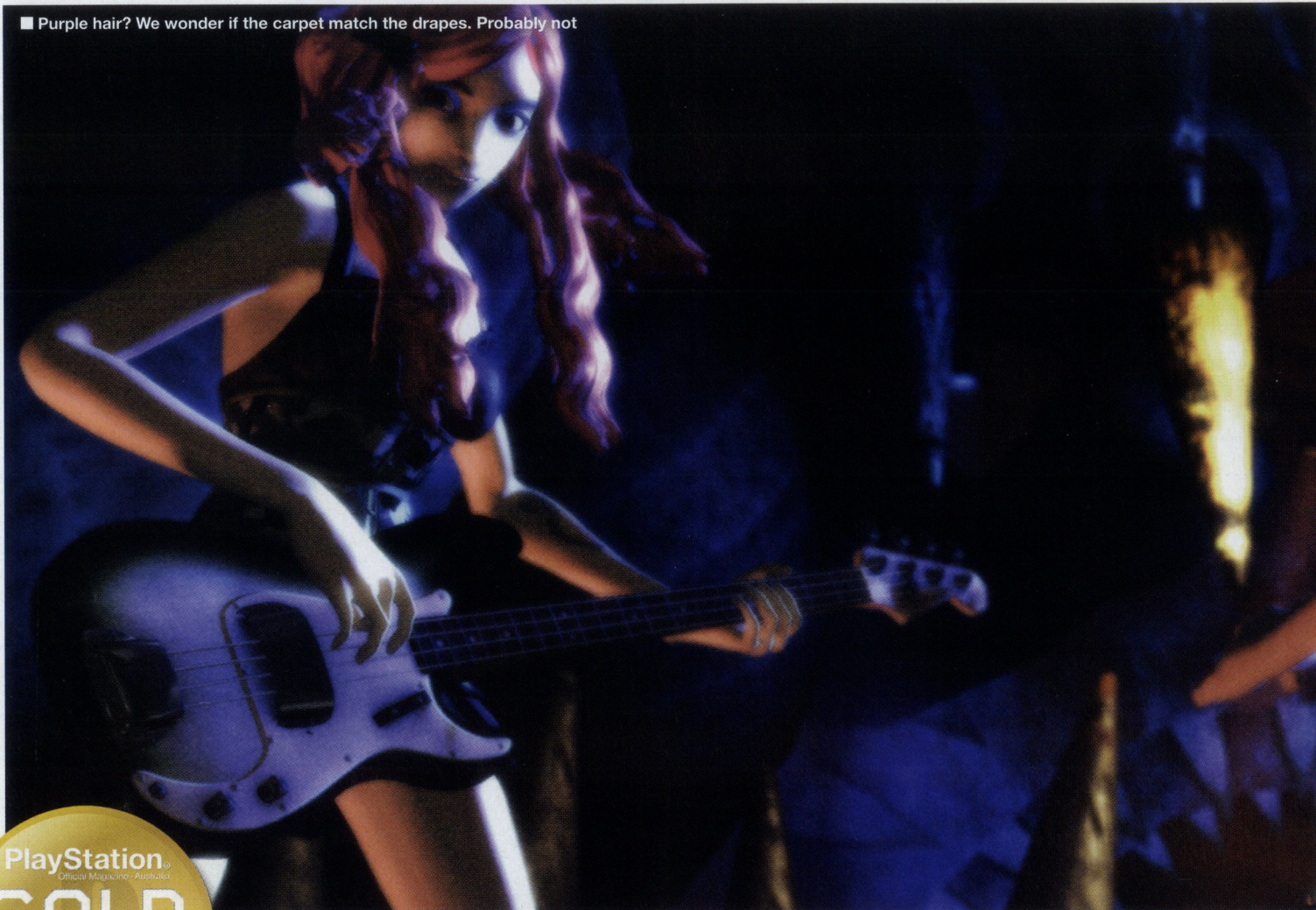
PS3 PS2 PSP  
**REVIEW**

■ **GENRE:** ROCK GOD SIMULATOR  
■ **RELEASE:** TBC  
■ **DEVELOPER:** HARMONIX  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
■ **PRICE:** TBA  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.rockband.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Harmonix was founded in 1995 by Alex Rigopulos and Eran Egozy. It was built on the philosophy that the experience of performing music could be made accessible to those who would be hopeless at a traditional instrument.

■ Purple hair? We wonder if the carpet match the drapes. Probably not



# ROCK BAND

"Run and tell all of the angels, this could take all night..."

**I**t's odd, but music games tend to attract a unique type of critic – the jaded musician. Years of living in a van, Jack Daniel's and cornflakes for breakfast and wearing the same T-shirt every day can take its toll on a person and, while many thrive under the conditions, some falter – and take it out on everyone else.

While most successful musicians

would be falling over themselves to get a track on these games for fans to enjoy, getting a little exposure in the process, these ones troll around the internet, lobbing in and out of *Rock Band* (and *Guitar Hero*) forums telling everyone that they're wasting their time and that they ought to just play a real instrument. Usually, this guy:

**A.** Thinks he's the single greatest thing to

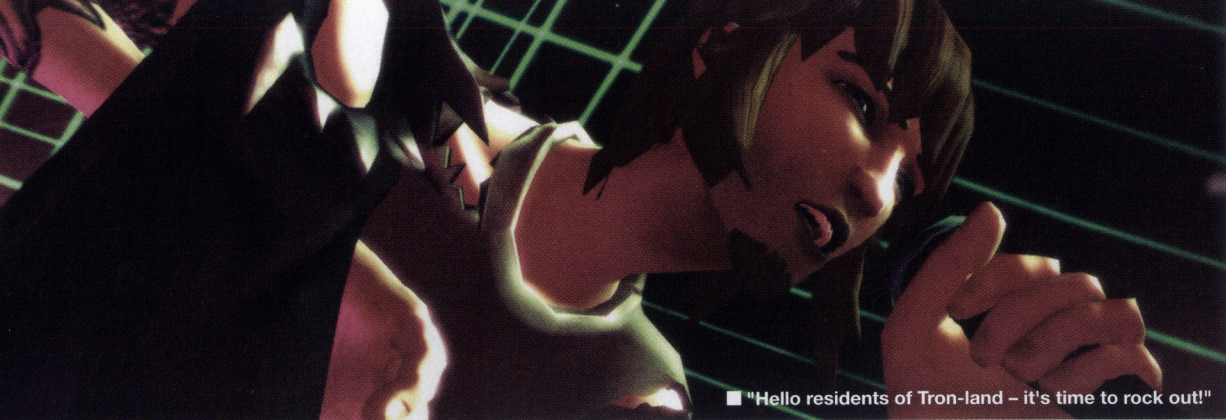
happen to music since the likes of Jimi Hendrix, although...

**B.** Isn't.

Of course, Eric Crapton has missed the point entirely. Two points, in fact. One, being a musician doesn't give you the right to demand non-musicians play real instruments rather than rhythm games. Tapping along to a great song in *Rock Band* is the same as hooning about in an

Aston Martin in *Gran Turismo* – they're both simulations, recreations, of the real thing – designed for enjoyment. If some prick told you to put down *Gran Turismo* and buy a real Aston Martin you'd punch him in the throat. Two, and most importantly, music isn't exclusive, it's inclusive. Rhythm games, including *Rock Band*, are about involvement, and so is music. *Rock Band* IS the single best





■ "Hello residents of Tron-land - it's time to rock out!"



way for people to enjoy music short of creating it themselves, and not everyone can do that. *Rock Band*, as a result, ought to be praised for that.

Which, of course, is precisely what we're about to do.

#### BALLROOM BLITZ

After some corporate shenanigans saw RedOctane scooped up by Activision and Harmonix gobbled up by MTV, the *Guitar Hero* series was plucked from the hands of its creators.

But Harmonix was already working on something else. Something big. *Rock Band* big... and when it comes to music games, *Guitar Hero* was only the entrée.

*Rock Band* is the next step in the evolution of music games. Actually, it's more like a giant leap. If *Guitar Hero* was a Neanderthal man banging two sticks together and painting woolly mammoths on cave walls, *Rock Band* is an interstellar space trekker, looking for some alien toilet to park his bricks. There really is a bigger gulf between these two titles than we had

first envisioned there'd be. *Guitar Hero III* is top fun, but *Rock Band* completely and utterly trounces it.

#### LEARN TO FLY

For those of you a little slow on the uptake, *Rock Band* combines guitars, drums and singing into one package for up to four people. Stripped to its individual parts, there's nothing particularly original in this game. The guitar and bass guitar parts work virtually identically to Harmonix's own *Guitar Hero*, the singing bears more than a passing resemblance to *SingStar* (or, again, Harmonix's *Karaoke Revolution*) and the drums aren't exactly unlike *DrumMania* (although you probably have to be Japanese to have ever got into that). *Rock Band*, however, is far, far more than the sum of its parts - and no one has put together a music game like this before.

There are single-player modes for drums, vocals and guitar (although not bass) that work much like *Guitar Hero*, but *Rock Band* is all about the multiplayer.

#### INFO BYTE

Many of the Harmonix staff are musicians themselves, and bands featuring staff contribute around half of the bonus tracks (with cuts from Bang Camaro, Freezepop and others making an appearance).



■ Three. That's the amount of leopards who died to make that jacket possible

#### DRUMLINE

The drums are where it's at in *Rock Band*. Match these drummers up with the correct piece of trivia.

- 1** Once passed out on horse tranquillisers at a gig and was replaced by an audience member.
- 2** Developed tendinitis and had to take drum lessons after surgery to re-learn to hold drum sticks the correct way.
- 3** Appeared as himself in *Grand Theft Auto Vice City Stories*.
- 4** Was born in Camden, NSW, birthplace of the nation's wealth and a certain OPS deputy editor.
- 5** Began teaching himself to play drums by banging on various items in his bedroom and lied about his age at his first audition.
- 6** Played in a cover band called Kiss at 13 until action by Kiss management shut them down.
- 7** Born Frank Edwin Wright III in West Germany, 1972, the son of a Vietnam War chopper pilot.
- 8** Is usually chained to the drum kit and once tried to break Jim Nabors' leg.



■ Rob Hirst



■ Tré Cool



■ Animal



■ Keith Moon



■ Phil Collins



■ Torry Castellano



■ Matt Cameron



■ Dave Grohl

1. Keith Moon 2. Torry Castellano 3. Phil Collins 4. Rob Hirst 5. Dave Grohl 6. Matt Cameron 7. Tré Cool 8. Animal



Four-player multiplayer to be exact. The band-in-a-box pack comes with a drum peripheral, the Fender Stratocaster guitar controller and a microphone. At the time of going to print the wireless Les Paul from *Guitar Hero III* isn't compatible with *Rock Band*, and while Harmonix has created a patch to make it work Activision has so far blocked it ("We believe we should be compensated for the use of our technology," said Activision spokeswoman Maryanne Lataif to the Boston Globe – albeit technology that, as far as we know, was created by Harmonix). At this point, at least until EA starts selling individual guitars, the only way to get the full four-player shebang is have a mate splurge on a full set too and jam together. It's worth doing, because we can't think of a more rewarding four-player game than *Rock Band*.

*Rock Band* encourages players to work together in a variety of ways – there's a huge focus on teamwork. Unity Phrases will net the band big points if the drummer and guitarists can nail them perfectly, and similar bonuses are up for grabs in certain songs with 'big finishes' (where all players can pound, shred or scream anything they want to build up a big pool of points). The catch with the 'big finishes' is that the guitarists and drummer must hit the last note of the song to lock away the score. If they don't, it's kaput.

Perfect runs in marked sections of the music will earn you Energy, like Star Power in *Guitar Hero*, which can be stored and/or unleashed to multiply your points. Guitarists activate Overdrive by pointing their axes skyward, drummers by striking the crash cymbal at the end of a fill and singers by ad-libbing between vocals where indicated. Better yet, you can trigger Overdrive to revive a fallen comrade – if your lead guitarist just borked a solo and got kicked out as a result you can bring the poor soul back on board by going into Overdrive.

#### GO WITH THE FLOW

The guitars and the mic don't really offer a great deal more than, say, their *Guitar*

bass) without it throwing in an extra click on its own accord. The new buttons, however, are slightly less so – they're large and rectangular and it's a bit harder to slide from one to another than it is on a *Guitar Hero* Les Paul. The smaller, solo buttons can trip you up too, but it all just takes a little adjusting. The note charts seem slightly less complex than that of *Guitar Hero III*, so it shouldn't take long.

Of course, *Rock Band*'s true drawback, for most at least, will be the drums. During our marathon session with the game it was the one instrument everyone wanted to play. We were rotating drummers faster than Spinal Tap. You'd no sooner warm up the stool when someone else shoved you off and snatched the sticks. With four pads and a kick pedal it's not easy, at least initially. For non-drummers, it's like learning to drive a manual – the first time you take



## "Rock Band isn't trying to trivialise music, it's opening it up to everyone."

*Hero* and *SingStar* counterparts. They function, basically, in the same fashion – you play the guitars by hitting the coloured fret buttons as the notes scroll down the screen and sing according to a lyrics ticker, matching your pitch to the on-screen levels. While the mic is fairly innocuous (although it does double as a tambourine or a cowbell on songs with long stretches of vocal inactivity) it's worth discussing the new guitar.

The *Rock Band* guitar, a ¾ Fender Stratocaster replica certainly looks a fraction cooler than the *Guitar Hero* Les Paul, but they're still largely similar – five coloured buttons, strum switch, whammy bar, you know the score. The Strat also has a five-way toggle switch to alter the sound you produce, but this is little more than a novelty, and five extra buttons further up the neck for solos. The new strum switch is fantastic; its soft action means you can't hear it click and you can pluck it with upstrokes (perfect for playing

off something is going to go wrong and people are going to be shouting at you. The kit is surprisingly sturdy and, with a loose grip on the real drumsticks provided, the pads have a decent amount of bounce. It's arguably the most satisfying element of *Rock Band*.

#### GIMME SHELTER

Band World Tour is the meat and potatoes of *Rock Band*. You can go solo if you can't round up a posse, but you won't appreciate what *Rock Band* has to offer unless you have some company. BWT requires at least two players (the AI can fill any missing roles). BWT will take you from dingy dives to giant arenas as your popularity soars and your fan base increases. Your fame is represented by stars and can't be lost, but your popularity is represented by fans, which can. Botch a performance and you'll lose fans, and the bigger the venue the more you'll lose. The goal is to be inducted







into the Rock Band Hall of Fame, but it doesn't really end there thanks to all the downloadable content on offer. With the 45 main songs on the disc you'll end up playing them a few times as the set lists for the 40 venues are slapped together, but downloadable tracks are inserted seamlessly into it, fleshing out the experience significantly.

#### WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

It's the presentation, however, that glues all the magic together – and in this department *Rock Band* is totally flawless. From the completely logical front-end (where the game adjusts to whichever instrument you want to proceed with, and sorts options and songs accordingly) to the extremely robust character customisation tool (hair, clothes, appearance, tattoos, gestures – all that jazz) to the clean in-game interface (complete with handy additions like the ability to see how close you are to a five-star performance) to the fault-free recreations of the gigs themselves, *Rock Band* is a class act. You'll hardly get a chance to see what's going on behind the scrolling notes, but anyone not involved at the time will appreciate the



new level of authenticity in the on-screen performances. Forget the stilted drummer you're used to in *Guitar Hero*, *Rock Band*'s digital drummer goes completely mad on the skins in a flurry of hair and arms. Guitarists trot around the stage, fingers blistering up and down the necks of their weapons of choice. Singers showboat to the crowd and to the camera, pouring it on like every song is their last. It just looks cool. Coupled with all manner of nifty effects (the grainy black and white filter looks rad) the on-screen antics are bristling with energy and attitude. But it doesn't stop there. The crowd is a big part of *Rock Band* too, really making you feel like you're performing in front a living, breathing sea of fans. Unleash Overdrive and the crowd goes nuts. Play a real crowd-pleasing anthem and they'll even sing along – Bon Jovi's 'Wanted Dead or Alive' is made all the better with the crowd chanting the chorus with you, "Wanted... WAAANTEEE-ED... dead or alive..." It's awesome. Just try *not* to grin.

#### EPIC

Being a musician and adoring *Rock Band* aren't mutually exclusive, we can assure you of that. If you still feel otherwise you

should put your toys back in your pram and piss off. *Rock Band* is a game made by people who love music for people who love music; it shows from every angle. In fact, the Harmonix offices are littered with about as many real instruments as plastic ones. *Rock Band* isn't trying to trivialise music, it's opening it up to everyone.

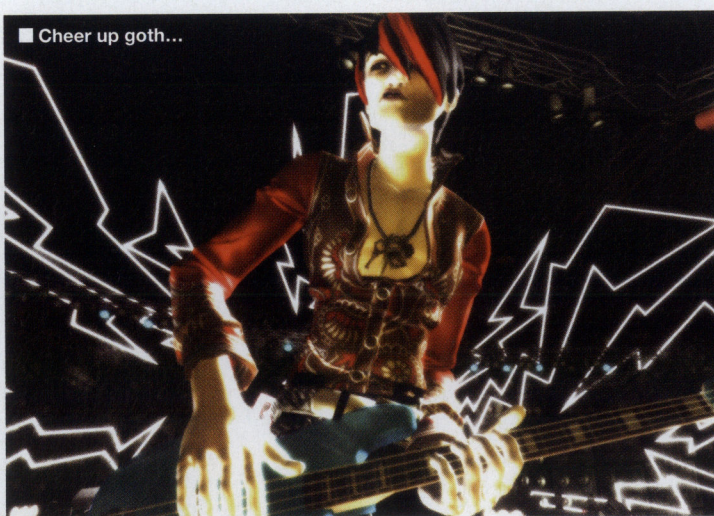
You can measure a game's success by how well it immerses you the experience. *Rock Band* is a triumph in every department. Harmonix has uncovered, and we dare say it wasn't accidental, the formula to make a music game truly great – immaculate presentation, great music and a job for as many of your friends as possible. While Neversoft was busy getting Slash to sign on the bottom line and nearly ruining *Guitar Hero III* with the hopeless Battle Mode, Harmonix has taken the genre to the next level and beyond. For so long music games had been islands unto themselves – guitar games, karaoke games, drum games. *Rock Band* combines them all into one killer package.

KISS might be half right; perhaps God *did* give rock 'n roll to you.

Harmonix, however, gave it to everyone. **♫ Luke Reilly**

#### SET LIST

We don't have the room to list all the songs featured on *Rock Band*, but between the main list and the unlockables there are over 50 – most of which are master tracks. Some of them include 'Black Hole Sun' by Soundgarden, 'Gimme Shelter' by The Rolling Stones, 'Enter Sandman' by Metallica, 'Epic' by Faith No More, 'Creep' by Radiohead, 'In Bloom' by Nirvana, 'Learn to Fly' by Foo Fighters, 'Won't Get Fooled Again' by The Who, 'Vaseline' by Stone Temple Pilots, 'Wanted Dead or Alive' by Bon Jovi, 'Say It Ain't So' by Weezer and 'Don't Fear The Reaper' by Blue Öyster Cult. At the time of going to print there are over 45 additional songs available to download for a small cost, including '...And Justice For All' by Metallica, 'Little Sister' by Queens of the Stone Age, 'Roxanne' by The Police, 'Heroes' by David Bowie, 'War Pigs' by Black Sabbath, 'Wonderwall' by Oasis, 'Fortunate Son' by Creedence Clearwater Revival, 'My Sharona' by The Knack, 'Joker & the Thief' by Wolfmother, 'Hard to Handle' by The Black Crowes, 'Interstate Love Song' by Stone Temple Pilots, 'Last Train to Clarksville' by The Monkees, 'All the Small Things' by Blink-182 and many more. More than 200 downloadable songs will be released in 2008.



■ Cheer up goth...

#### PROS:

- Incredible fun
- Impeccably presented

#### CONS:

- It doesn't have any AC/DC, Pearl Jam or [insert band here]

**VERDICT:** The best party game ever. You wanted the best; you got the best – *Rock Band* rocks.

**OFFICIAL SCORE:**  
**10**



■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** CRITERION  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** <http://burnout.ea.com>

■ **BACK STORY:** *Paradise* is the first in the series to support driving through gas stations to automatically refill your Burnout meter and/or automatically repair your car, which allows you to extend a Road Rage event beyond the car's normal limit.

# BURNOUT PARADISE

This must be just like livin' in paaaradise...

**B**old reinvention, whether well meant or otherwise, can sometimes backfire by taking something absolutely awesome – and rendering it crap. The truth of this concept can be traced through the following real life examples: the whole Peter Parker going emo in *Spider-Man 3* idea, airlines instigating a one passenger per bathroom rule, and Britney Spears who was once

highly shaggable – but nowadays is about as sexy as shag carpeting.

Similarly, the *Burnout* franchise has had a questionable relationship with the term 'reinvention'. Vocal purists (us after six beers) will tell you that *Burnout 3* was the pinnacle of the series, whereas venerable sages (eleven beers and a vodka chaser) will slur for hours about *Burnout 2* being the king ding-a-ling.

*Burnout Revenge* and the flash-in-the-pan *Burnout Dominator* are deliberately excluded from the debate and the mere mention of them can lower one's respect levels considerably.

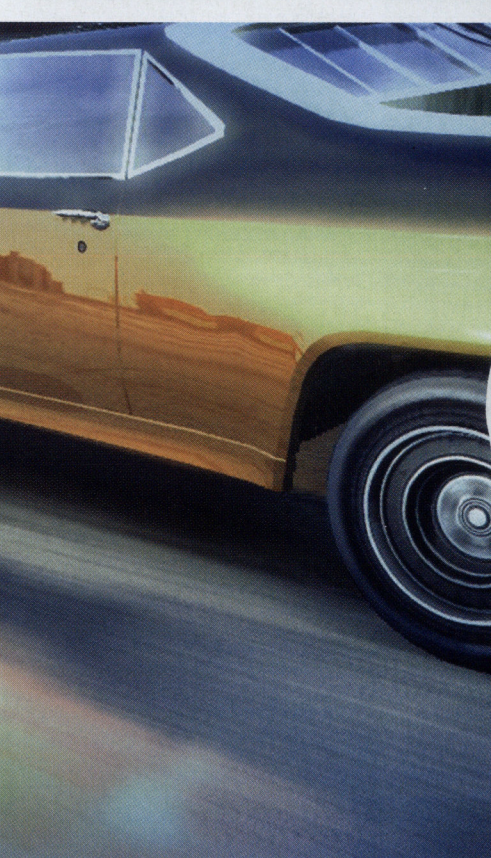
The systemic anomaly we've identified here is 'change'. Introduce divergent new modes like *Revenge*'s Traffic Attack and fans crack the shits, conversely give them *Dominator* – a spin-off which attempts to

■ Background reflections in the cars' paintwork – that's how *Burnout Paradise* rolls

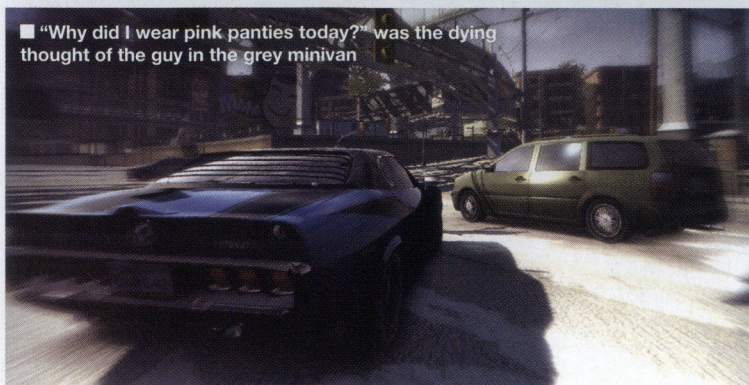


PlayStation  
SILVER  
AWARD  
9/10

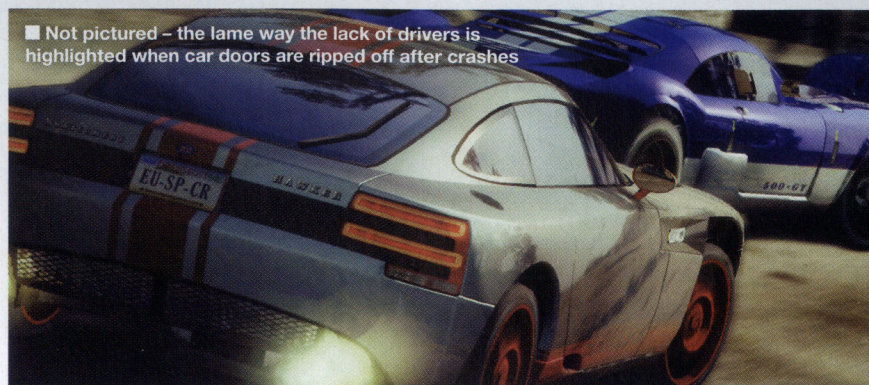
■ "So that's what the back of a car looks like"... said the world's best *Burnout* player



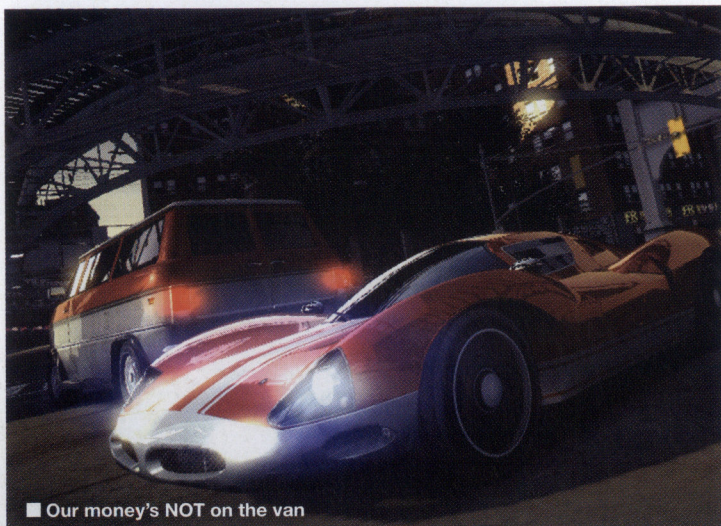
■ "Why did I wear pink panties today?" was the dying thought of the guy in the grey minivan



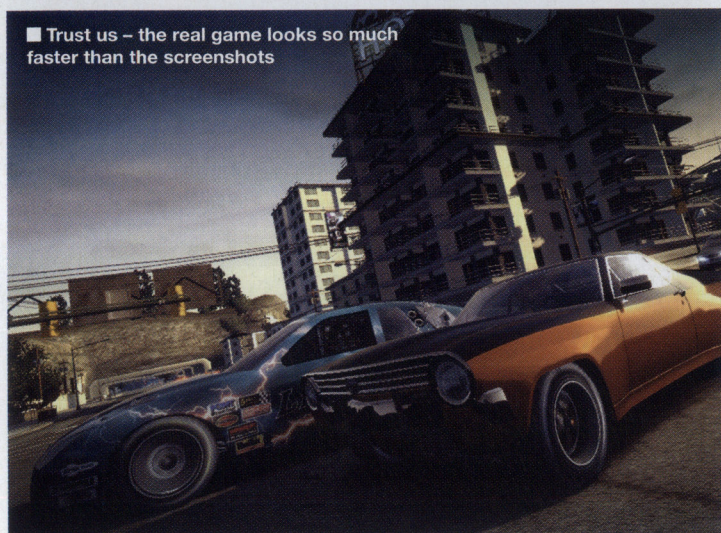
■ Not pictured – the lame way the lack of drivers is highlighted when car doors are ripped off after crashes







■ Our money's NOT on the van



■ Trust us – the real game looks so much faster than the screenshots

“Personally, we regard controlled boosting like we do braking – for senior citizens or pansies – but it’s nice to know the option is there.”



■ How about that – this car has more wheels than George Bush has brain cells

roll backward to the earlier greatness and – you guessed it – more shit cracking. And it is with this volatile situation in mind that we boldly review a controversial new sequel which shocks us by flipping the franchise on its head, while rediscovering its roots...

#### COOLER THAN THE DEMO...

The very first thing that will strike you about *Paradise* is the lack of barriers. The fictional metropolis of Paradise City is a hand-crafted, free-form environment; and the whole concept of enclosed track racing has been rendered completely prehistoric. From the word go you’re handed a paddock basher car from the wreckers and then let loose onto the sumptuously detailed downtown streets – and what happens next is left completely up to your own destructive little minds.

Rather than navigate through a series of menus to find an event, your mini-map easily pinpoints event markers for the 120 traffic light challenges which include point-to-point races, Road Rages and Burning Routes, and the all-new Stunt Run and Marked Man events. Upon locating and hitting **L2+R2** at a set of “Race traffic-lights” we soon discovered that the old girl was a familiar yet alien experience. All the usual stuff is still there; the beautiful visuals whip past your retinas at a blistering 60 fps, the opponent slamming satisfies the ol’ killer-instinct, and the boost drifting mechanic has been honed to sublime perfection. However, instead of having pre-determined roads blocked off with obvious chevrons for your convenience; you’ll have to navigate your own way using a combination of street knowledge, a compass/street sign indicator at the top of the screen, or the mini-map in the lower right hand side of the screen. This obviously takes some getting used to, and we’ll admit that we got pretty fricken lost and crumpled on some of our first attempts – but this is a

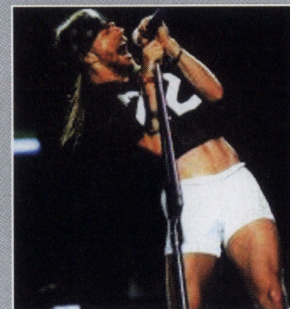
temporary problem that soon improves.

#### BURNING OUT > FADING AWAY

After happily Road Raging and racing for a while, our curiosity kicked in so we drove over to scope out the newer event types. Stunt mode essentially turns everything into a *Burnout/Tony Hawk* hybrid; you’re given a target score and time limit to boost chain super-jumps, drifts, barrel rolls, and hand brake slides. It’s a refreshing experience

#### THE EXTRAORDINARY: DECENT EA TRAX

EA Trax for the *Burnout* games have witnessed some questionable music in the past – but all that has been forgiven due to the fantastic mix of artists which reinforces the old vs. new theme of the game. Notable bands include: Alice in Chains, Guns N’ Roses, Faith No More, Jane’s Addiction, Killswitch Engage, N.E.R.D., Moxie, Seether, Soundgarden, Sugarcult, and Twisted Sister. On the whole, the tunes here are surprisingly nutritious – we do call shenanigans on the presence of Avril Lavigne’s ‘Girlfriend’ though.



#### INFO BYTE

Paradise City is 30+ square kilometers full of roads, green grass and girls that are pretty. Disclaimer: grass is green-ish and girls aren’t included.



that's definitely a worthy addition to the formula – personally we couldn't wipe the stupid grin off our face when we nailed a multiplier exploding, double barrel roll.

The second new mode in *Paradise* is Marked Man; which is essentially a throwback to the pursuit mode of the old *Burnout* days of yore – except you're the pursuee this time. Basically you have to get from point A to B with seven pissed off AI opponents viciously shunting you into oncoming traffic, walls, and even their fellow colleagues in a psychotic attempt to run you off the road.

If the punishment becomes too great in this mode – or indeed any event you're participating in, at any point during *Paradise* – you can hit **[X] + [Y]** to instantly start Showtime mode, which is the updated version of Crash mode. Upon triggering Showtime, your car will begin a slow-mo cartwheel, and you can steer and propel yourself into surrounding traffic in a bid to smash the current street's damage record. Provided you've got some boost (which is earned per collision), enough victims, and the requisite savant abilities – you can merrily crash yourself, theoretically forever.

After beating a set number of single-player races to upgrade your Paradise City license, or finding and taking down unique rivals zinging along the streets; you can unlock muscle cars, exotics, hot rods and even supercharged SUVs. All cars can be used online and have diverse weight/durability characteristics with unique boost types like Stunt, Speed or Aggression. For example: *Burnout 2* purists fanging along the driftable mountain passes which are akin to racing along the back of a rattlesnake (fast, curvaceous, and somebody always dies by the end of it) should choose a Speed type that supports chaining continuous nitrous 'burnouts' – if you have the cajones to hold the button down nonstop. But if you're into cunning stunts or tactical road rage amidst the sharp cornering metropolis areas, you'd pick something that lets you boost sporadically. Personally, we regard controlled boosting like we do braking – for senior citizens or pansies – but it's nice to know the option is there.

#### RUN TO PARADISE

Ultimately, we think *Burnout Paradise* is a



#### GETTING AMONGST SOME SWEET MULTI-PERSON ACTION

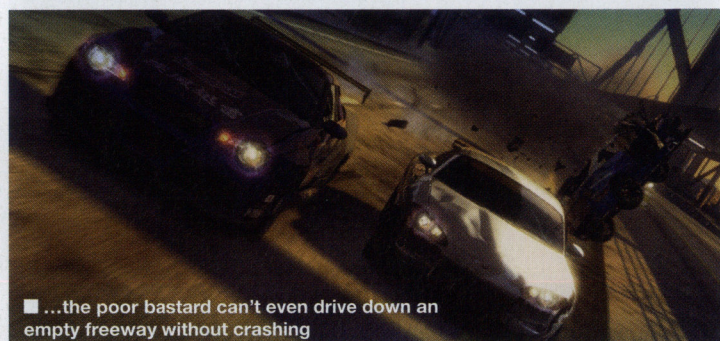
Hooking the PS3 online the benefits of *Paradise*'s multiplayer mode become immediately apparent. With a quick flick on the D-pad you effortlessly slide into the online Freeburn mode that lets up to seven other people cruise around with you, challenge you to events, or T-bone your sorry arse for the hell of it. In addition to this you can tailor event rules and parameters according to better represent your particular *Burnout* taste (or lack of taste, by switching on *Revenge*'s Traffic Attack rules). The setting up and racing of events during Freeburn is seamless and baby smooth – in short, it impressed the hell out of us.

We were awed further by the nuanced strategies available for winning an online event, seen mainly through the critical importance of car selection.

step in a totally sweet new direction and it successfully revitalizes the franchise without denying us any of the things that we loved about the previous legendary iterations – *Burnout 2* and 3. With a bit more tweaking with race navigation, the re-introduction of a proper Crash Mode, and possibly the option to teleport to pre-explored areas instead of making us drive there – we imagine Criterion's next offering will be nigh on perfection. Basically, the overwhelming majority of *Paradise* rocks harder than Slash during an epic guitar solo. But on rare occasion this rock can get affected by Axl Rose swaggering on-stage wearing his silver bike shorts and screaming "Take me down to the Paradise city, where I might place last 'cause I navigate shitty. Why won't you pleeease let me retryyy". Beyond these minor niggles, though, it's still very purchasable. **— Adam Mathew**



■ Guess which car Dave Kozicki's driving?



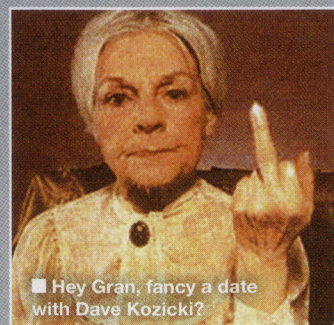
■ ...the poor bastard can't even drive down an empty freeway without crashing



■ ...plus – he wears bras. Fact!

#### A FACE THAT ONLY YOUR MOTHER COULD LOVE

If you have a PlayStation Eye connected – and we don't even want to know why you seedy bastards have one already pre-setup – you can personalize your Paradise City license with a shot of your melon. Another awesome feature is when you take someone down online, and provided they have a camera too, you can swap pictures at the moment of impact – which are saveable. Expect to capture the full gamut of human emotions in pictorial form: rage, anger and people one finger saluting you.



■ Hey Gran, fancy a date with Dave Kozicki?

#### PROS:

- Massive, detailed city
- Chaining-Burnouts returns

#### CONS:

- DJ Atomika is a tosser
- "No retry" option sucks

**VERDICT:** We love a fully-sick *Burnout*. And this is the fullest and sickest we've yet seen.

**OFFICIAL SCORE:**  
**09**





playstation.com.au

eyeofjudgment.com

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PLAYSTATION 3



# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **RELEASE:** FEBRUARY 2008  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EPIC  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** RED ANT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1 (1-16 ONLINE)  
■ **PRICE:** \$119.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** unrealtournament3.com

■ **BACK STORY:** The original *Unreal Tournament* was released back in 1999 as *Quake 3: Arena*'s main competitor. Thanks to a tonne of game modes, stupendously good AI, deep weapons, and great level design it became an instant classic.

■ "It's cold, wet, my house just exploded, I've got ED209 on my ass and you're asking me if I 'had a nice day'?! Damn!"



## UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3

A real contender for online game of the year – already!!!

PlayStation.  
Official Magazine Australia  
**BRONZE  
AWARD**  
8/10

What sort of value do you look for in a game before shelling out your hard-earned? What features? How much play time? Recent must-haves – your *Call of Duty 4s*, your *Orange Boxes* – have spoilt us by packing in robust multiplayer options on top of deep single-player experiences. If you've embraced that sort of rationing as "the standard" you'd be forgiven for being a

tad sceptical about how much you'll get out of *Unreal Tournament 3*.

After all, while you can play it offline and alone against the game's A-grade bots, it's really about jumping online to grate up strangers like cheddar. It happens to deliver on that front with a throbbing volley of bloodied thumbs up. Trust us. But is its online quality enough to woo those who've come to demand a full-

faced single-player mode to go with their multiplayer tomfoolery?

Before we answer that, there's no getting past your first reaction when you see this baby in full wail. For this, its flagship title, Epic has pushed the Unreal Engine 3 into the stratosphere. Simply put, buy this game and it'll be the best looking thing in your house. Forget your Gran's antique China set, your baby

photos, and your ZOO covergirl collection. Despite it being a pounding sci-fi bloodbath that moves like a dino-killing meteor, there are enough picturesque locales here to make you want to move house into its world. While *COD4* saw you war across comparatively mundane concrete dives, the fantasy world of *UT3* places melees amidst ambient alien gardens, eerie space stations, and derelict





■ Tanks: they blow shit up real good



■ "Hurry guys - we have to save the forest moon of Endor. Oh wait, sorry, wrong game"



## INFO BYTE

Midway asked us to point out that the version of the game reviewed here is the American copy, but as there are no planned differences for the Aussie release it's hardly worth worrying about.

■ "Hey, where'd you get those scars from?" "Your Mum!" BLAM

ice worlds. They're nicer places to buy the farm. Combined with some of the most detailed models, weaponry and vehicles we've seen, and *UT3* easily jumps straight to the top of the PS3 pack in terms of sheer screen glamour.

Just as impressive is the performance. As we rip rolled through the game modes - all populated with chaotic explosions and bots madder than a bulldog with his nuts in a vice - *UT3* barely flinched. Occasionally the game had to catch its breath for a frame or two when we took to the air in a vehicle, but it was hardly noticeable at all.

There's only one thing that gets our goat about *UT3*'s visuals - though admittedly it's a criticism directed at the majority of PS3 games as well. Where the hell is the support for 1080p? Yes, it's true that most gamers don't have televisions that support the extra lines of resolution. Yes, it's true that a pile of existing titles, including *The Orange Box*, only run at 720p. But *UT3* is an eye-bulging tour de force. The series always has been. If there was to be a beacon for unbridled on-screen resolution, this should've been it (and yes, we know we're whinging).

Once you've gotten past the welcome assault on the senses, the mayhem that is *UT3* awaits. There's a lot to be said for something repetitious that manages to keep a grin on your face. Like rollercoasters and massages from busty women, *UT3* keeps you wanting more. For one, while we've all played countless deathmatch and capture the flag games before, *UT3* does them better. Here each round's circle of life spins like the back wheel of a Ferrari. You can die, respawn, kill, and die in a fistful of seconds. It's go,

go, go! And it works.

Despite this intensity it rarely feels like you're out there madly pulling the trigger. Thanks to a well-nurtured arsenal of weaponry that each feature two fire modes the game constantly has you forging attacks in different ways. The famed rocket launcher, for example, can lock onto a target and fire three rounds in a tight spiral to quickly take out an enemy vehicle from afar, but a second later you'll have to spin around and bounce

## THE MOD SQUAD

Perhaps the most exciting thing about *UT3* is that Epic and Midway are encouraging home enthusiasts to create mods for the PS3 version, too. In fact the first mod for *UT3*, Action Cam, has already been released and allows you to play the game from a third-person perspective! Expect bigger mods to come down the track that will radically change the game even more. WWII mods, new weapons - it's all possible!



## REAL UNREAL WEAPONS



Weapons are big business. We sniffed around and found a couple of brand new futuristic weapons that will probably be out and seen on Middle East news segments any day now. First up is the VIPER portable robot. At only nine inches high it can be remotely controlled by soldiers in the field to conduct a range of missions. Second is our personal favourite, the Corner Shot Assault Pistol Rifle (yeah, you read that right). This sucker can fire around corners and even comes with fake cats to help camouflage the barrel. True.





the rockets out in the weapon's grenade mode to stop some butt plug stealing your base's booty. Epic know gamers like their weapons like they like their boxed chocolates – with variety.

Fortunately *UT3* is more than twitch shooting thanks to its main event – the pattie in its hamburger – Warfare mode. Here's how it works: Warfare is a two-team game set on a broad battlefield. To win, your team must enter the other team's base and destroy their Power Core first. Sound simple? Hold on. In order to shut down the Power Core's defences your team must capture a direct line of smaller bases (or nodes) scattered around the battlefield that connect from your Power Core to your opponent's.

It might sound a little complicated, but you'll work it out quickly thanks to a handy map that shows you where you should be concentrating your efforts. Just

on the other hand, is a rolling harbinger of doom that can deploy an ion canon capable of more wanton destruction than al-Qaeda and those Brand Power ads put together.

So yes, after all that soppy praise we'd like to confirm that – pound for pound – *UTIII* is the best online multiplayer game you can get. While obviously outgunned by *Warhawk* in terms of aerial hijinks, it makes up for it on the ground. Furthermore, its team games are more engaging than those found in *Call of Duty 4* and *Team Fortress 2*.

Despite such blanket awesomeness it's not a game for all action fans. Looking beyond any obvious objections to the out-there setting, *UTIII* fails to tick a few crucial boxes. By far the most painful omission is the lack of any split-screen support. We realise *UTIII* is first and foremost a PC game, but even the original

“Like rollercoasters and massages from busty women, *UT3* knows how to keep you wanting more.”



■ “Oh cool! Disco lights! ARGHHHHHHH!”



■ Golgansaur hated the press...



■ “I’m in ur citiez... destroyin’ ur buildinz!”

know that Warfare is voted by us as the mode most likely to turn you into a *UT3* junkie. Don't be surprised if you sweat your way through a drawn out battle then jump right back in for another round. It puts you in the zone.

The vehicles of *UT3*, of which there are now two types, are partly to blame for this level of addiction. You've got the traditional Axon machinery and the freaky Necris stuff that looks like it has oozed out of the brain of a *Stargate* SG-1 fan after they've drunk an entire bottle of brown-bag scotch.

Invisible mobile booby trappers, *Matrix*-esque flying machines complete with tentacles, artillery tanks that can rain hell from the other side of the map – they're all here. The big pappas from each of the two sides are the most impressive, though. The Necris Dark Walker is a towering tripod that entices you to run away and hide under your bed the first time you see it. The Axon Leviathan,

*Unreal Tournament* on the PS2 had four-player split screen. There's support for LAN, but like a fair LBW happening between Australia and India, everyone knows that sort of stuff rarely happens.

The other major gripe is that the online game only supports up to 16 players. What's more, in practice most connections will only be able to sustain eight or nine in total. If you were hoping for massive online battles, erm, stop.

Okay, so at this point in the review you've either thought, “No split-screen as well as no story mode! No thanks” or, “Who cares about that? Gimme, gimme, gimme!” It's fairly cut and dried. If you want the best online shooter out then buy *Unreal Tournament 3*. If you rarely play online and long for something that equates to the split-screen fun of *Resistance: Fall of Man*, just suffice with going down to your local game shop and watching it through the window with awe.

— James Ellis

## MIGHTY MOUSE

Massive kudos should go to Epic for including mouse and keyboard support. While the game works fine with a control pad, it obviously makes it easier for you to spank the enemy like the snot-eating brats they are (don't worry if you're a SIXAXIS player. You can choose to filter out servers that allow mouse and keyboard if you so wish). To get it to work, simply plug a USB mouse and keyboard into the slots on the front of the PS3, use your

control pad to navigate through the menus to start a round, and off you go. The only downside is that while you can adjust the sensitivity of the mouse, there's no provision for rebinding commands on the keyboard. WASD it is.



## PROS:

- Sooooo hot right now...
- Mod support!

## CONS:

- No split-screen?
- Lame single-player

**VERDICT:** Superlative – *Unreal Tournament 3* is the most gorgeous piece of ass on the PS3.

**OFFICIAL SCORE:**  
**08**



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■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **RELEASE:** FEBRUARY 2008  
■ **DEVELOPER:** CAPCOM  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.capcom.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Capcom's *Lost Planet: Extreme Condition* initially made its debut on the Xbox 360 (boo... hiss...) in the beginning of 2007. Capcom recently decided that the PS3 should get in on the 'extreme' action with this belated port.

# LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION

Previously on Lost... Planet

**A**ll right people – first things first. Before we get into the meat of this review, there happens to be an enormous elephant in the room and we're going to address it. Yes! *Lost Planet* is pretty much a simple, direct, port of an Xbox 360 game. And not only that, but a port of an *old* Xbox 360 game (over a year old to be precise). So basically, if you happen to be a gamer that prefers

to be straddled atop the cutting edge of technology (not *quite* as painful as it sounds...) then you may want to steer clear of a title that, from almost every production perspective you can imagine, is old news.

But that certainly doesn't mean that *Lost Planet* should be dismissed straight off the bat – far from it. Because while *Lost Planet* may seem dated from the very

second you start playing, it provides a refreshing set of gameplay dynamics that may subtain your interest – at least for a short while... if you like that sort of thing.

## OBLIGATORY PLOT SUMMARY – ACTIVATE!

Set far in future, on a colonised planet (E.D.N. III) caked in a thick layer of ice and snow, you play as Wayne Holden, duking

it out on the regular with a variety of the planet's native inhabitants, the Akrid. Ranging from puny to colossal in size, you can attack these bug-like monstrosities on foot with standard weaponry, or via the game's many Vital Suits: small scale mechs that increase your strength and firepower exponentially. This makes for a gameplay experience that manages to juggle third-person action with your

■ Running away: the option of cowards... and Olympic sprinters



■ "Hey big robot guy, how ye doin'?"

## INFO BYTE

We're sure we mentioned this before, but *Lost Planet*'s main character is actually based on real life Korean actor Lee Byung-Hun.







traditional mech game mechanics adequately, without diluting either.

E.D.N. III's environment, and the atmosphere it creates, is one of *Lost Planet*'s real strengths, and in many ways it carries the game through many of its mediocre spots. *Lost Planet*'s environment has long been abandoned, leaving a desolate snowbound wasteland, and Capcom has done a solid job of creating a sense of isolation in the environments.

As you plough your way through the snow, the sound effects, the general feeling of weight, and slow-paced movement of the character really evoke a feeling of treading an area thick with snow. *Lost Planet* does a great job of evoking the oppressive difficulties of moving through this extreme environment.

#### BUGS... BIG ASS BUGS...

In addition, the sense of scale is expertly judged; it will frequently surprise, and on rare occasions terrify, as prodigiously sized Akrid clamber from beneath the snow when you least expect it. It's

during these epic battles that *Lost Planet* undoubtedly shines brightest.

But it's more than just the sheer scope and size of some of the Akrid (although they are undoubtedly huge). It's the way they are presented. One Akrid in particular made the entire screen shake as it made its entrance, covered in a huge cloud of snow that at first obscures your vision. The effect these beasts have on the environment leaves you in no doubt as to the sheer power of the Akrid and, conversely, how puny you seem in comparison. This makes the act of taking down the humungous bug bastards all the more rewarding.

#### AWESOME, SO WHERE DO I SIGN?

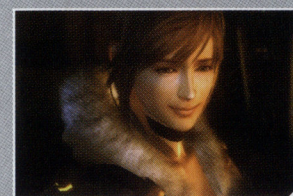
Whoa, steady there, best hold your horses there Tonto – there's a good reason why the score down there reads '6' instead of '8' or '9'.

To begin with, the game looks terrible, unforgivably terrible considering it's a port of a one-year-old 360 game. The texture work is particularly shabby, but *Lost Planet* is positively plagued by jaggies so prevalent your TV will be screaming out for mercy. It says 720p on the tin, but it sure as hell don't feel like it.



#### LUKA HERE!

We would like to take the time and space to salute supporting eye candy Luka, for her service to gratuitous videogame cleavage. Despite the fact that *Lost Planet* is covered in ice and snow, and despite the fact that staying outside in these hazardous conditions for even a short amount of time will kill you, trooper Luka still manages to have her ponderous puppies on display for pretty much the entire game. It makes no sense at all, and she would probably freeze to death in seconds, but we appreciate the effort nonetheless.



In addition, there is a creepy blur effect that kicks in when turning sharply. You may mistake it for a frame rate drop, or your TV's refresh rate at first, but eventually you'll come to realise it's just a by product of a poorly produced game – making you more frustrated than ever.

It essentially comes down to laziness on Capcom's part – a laziness that PS3 owners simply shouldn't have to tolerate. *Lost Planet* was hardly at the forefront of technology when it was first released, but now, in the wake of graphical masterpieces like *Assassin's Creed* and *Uncharted*, it looks like a dog's dinner – Home Brand dog's dinner.

In short, shoddy half-arsed ports are

not cool, and *Lost Planet* is a shoddy half-arsed port. In fact, when we review other shoddy half-arsed ports in the future, we'll probably use *Lost Planet* as a reference point, a metaphor for all that's wrong with multiplatform videogames.

Yes, *Lost Planet* is a solid game, and yes, you may want to check it out for the many things it does right – but if you do decide to spend some hard-earned moolah on this cash cow you best be prepared for the subsequent flood of guilt and self righteous rage. Guilt for supporting laziness on a grand scale, and rage for the way the Capcom has treated the PS3 and its owners. Simply not good enough. **Mark Serrels**

#### PROS:

- Monsters look and feel great
- Nice environments

#### CONS:

- Shoddy port
- Looks extremely dated

**VERDICT:** Solid enough, but PS3 owners shouldn't have to stand for developer laziness.

**OFFICIAL SCORE:**  
**06**



■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-7  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 1080p  
■ **WEB:** www.eagames.com.au

■ **BACK STORY:** The first two *FIFA Street* games touched down on the PS2 in response to a lack of arcade sports titles. Both titles were only moderately received but paved the way for the series to bring some major improvements to the PS3 version.

■ Not pictured/heard – crazy Brazilian samba music



# FIFA STREET 3

More ball kicking than a ladies' karate class!

**F**IFA Street 3 is a member of a small but elite group of titles out to make you feel more popular. Let's face it, online play is all good and well but there's something about a room packed with sweaty gamers chugging down beers and wielding control pads customised like bowling balls that can't be beat. Yeah, sure, there's a pile of sports titles that can currently do it. But this does it better.

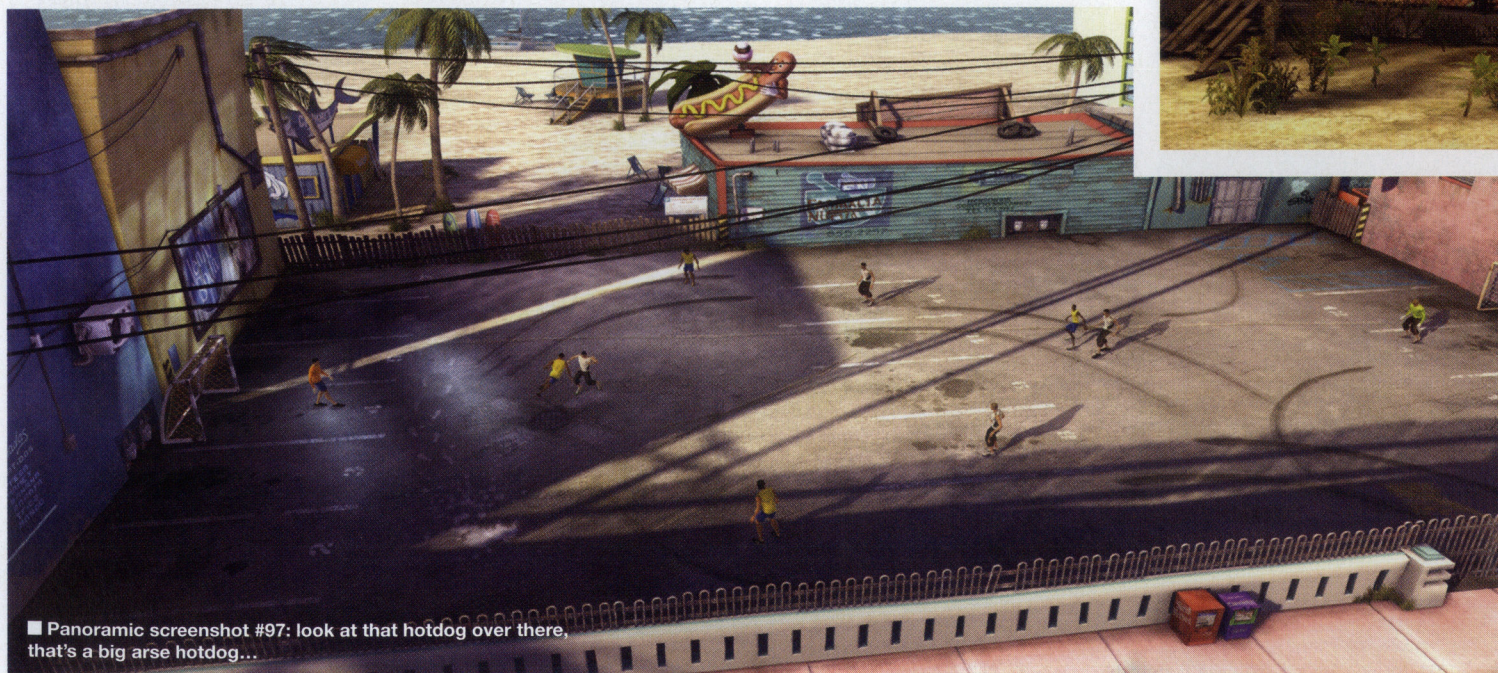
Why? Most of us have visited a mate who has roped us into a sports game we're unfamiliar with and then dished out

a hand-over-mouth beating. "Oh, wow! You completely dominated me for – what – the whole game! Wow, 87-13. Hmm. Is that my arse in the corner? I better be off..." FIFA Street 3, on the other hand, is a just-add-thumbs recipe. Any group of random mates – whether they own a PlayStation or not – can dig in and be competitive. And dig in they shall.

#### A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

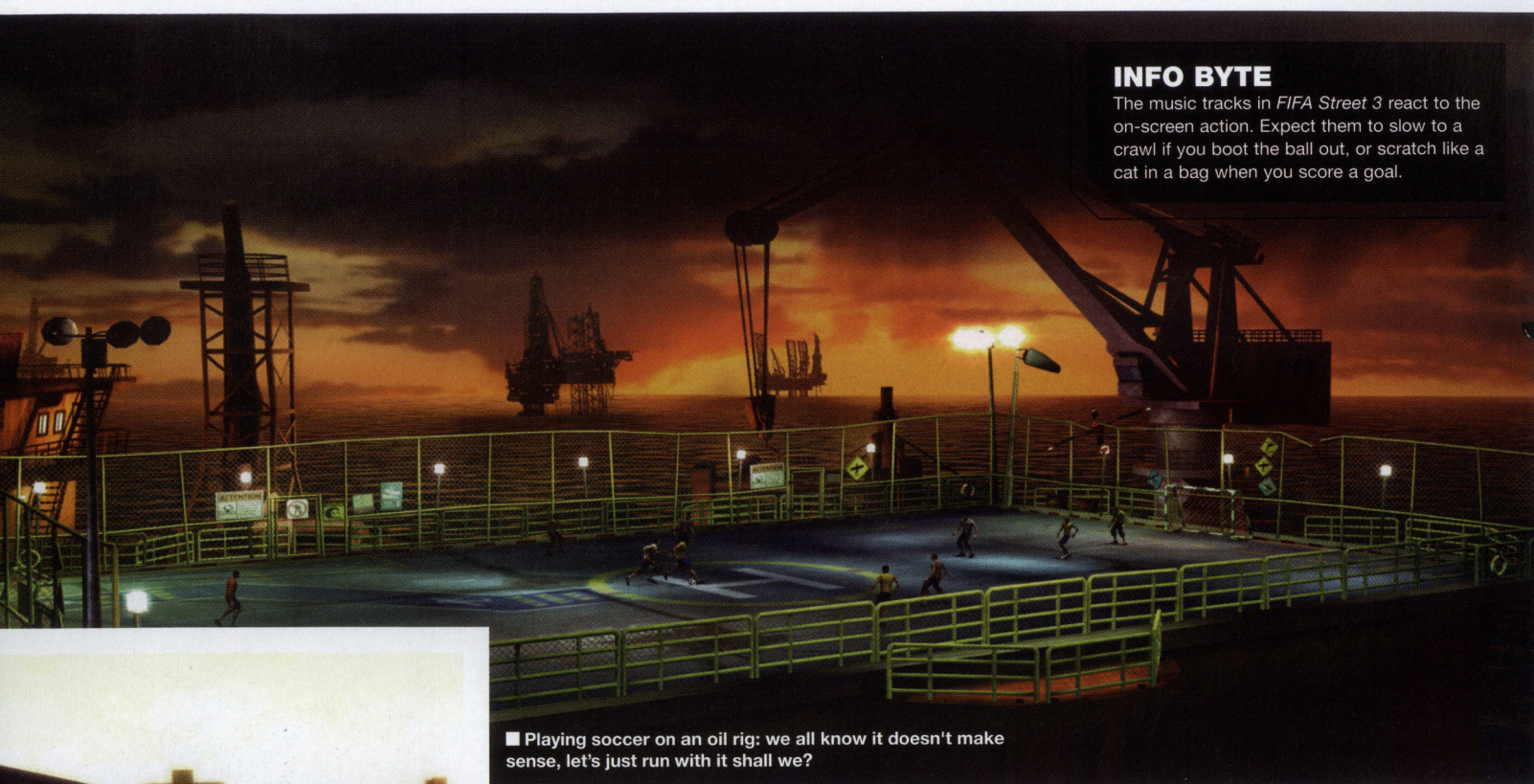
FIFA Street 3 is a gamepad-powered Adidas ad. You know the ads we're

talking about. International boot scooters that get paid more in one match than most people earn in a decade dance around playing with their balls. Overhead flicks, quadruple pirouettes, Brazilians, shots that burn holes through demonic spawns, more Brazilians, and umm... David Beckham. Now take those fancy-schmancy ball-wanking shenanigans (minus the bit about demonic spawns) throw it on a no-rules 5-a-side outdoor arena made for assy-tricks and canon-fired goals and you've got the arcade



■ Panoramic screenshot #97: look at that hotdog over there, that's a big arse hotdog...

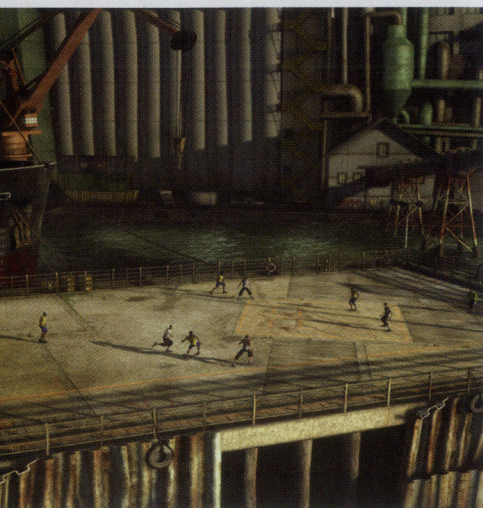
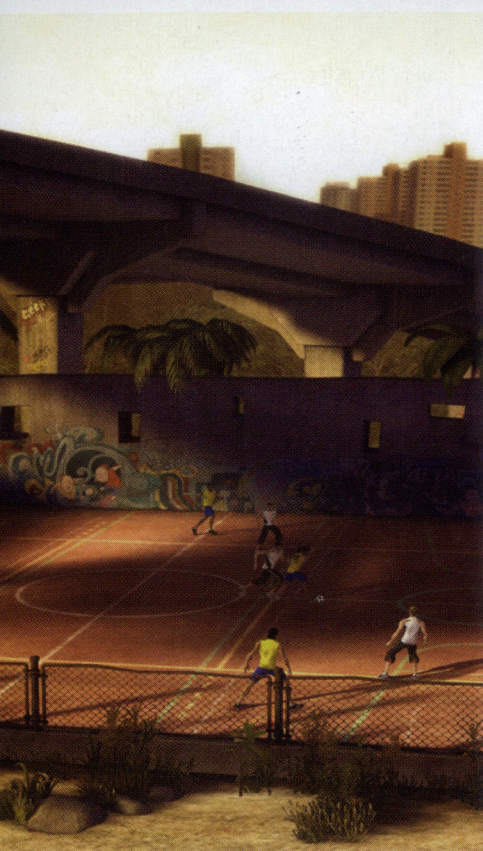




## INFO BYTE

The music tracks in *FIFA Street 3* react to the on-screen action. Expect them to slow to a crawl if you boot the ball out, or scratch like a cat in a bag when you score a goal.

■ Playing soccer on an oil rig: we all know it doesn't make sense, let's just run with it shall we?



## "No offside. No fouls. Just glory"

gusto that is *FIFA Street 3*. That's it. No offside. No fouls. Just glory.

In fact the only complication is the inclusion of the Gamebreaker bar. Like in *NBA Homecourt*, successfully pulling off tricks, like drags and flicks, fills the graphical slab at the top of the screen. Riskier tricks fill the bar faster, too.

Perform a little flick near your own goal and you'll only get a waif of bar filler. Pull off a daring spin and juggle followed by a volleyed goal that'd turn Cristiano Ronaldo green with envy and you'll score a massive flood of Gamebreaker juice.

Once the bar is full you can enter into Gamebreaker mode where the game – apparently – drops some serious acid. For a set amount of time you can unleash rainbow-streaked shots that threaten the goal from anywhere inside the opponent's half. If you're quick it's possible to score a hat-full of goals in this time and – erm – break open the game.

### TASTING THE GLORY

Starting to get a feel for this game's potential? Think about it. It's a six-player match. You and two other mates are down by three in a low-scorer and there's only one minute to go. You manage to kick start a gamebreaker and pull back three quick goals. The bull-mad players in the room erupt into front-seat intensity. After being down for most of the match you've suddenly clawed your way out of a shark's arse, back into striking distance. Surely you can't win. Five seconds remain. But you've got the ball – and the momentum. You lob the ball up court. Your mate beside you mashes the strike button to volley it home. It's... IT'S...

You get the idea. The above aptly describes the sort of quick thrills OPS had when taking this baby for a run in the games room. It's brilliant flash-in-the-pan, by-the-seat-of-your-pants fun.

### NOT FOR NIGELS

Unfortunately this simplicity is also the game's major limitation. Specifically *FIFA Street 3* only shines as a multiplayer title. You can tackle the game on your own, sure, but sweeping the legs of a CPU attacker or leaping up a wall to avoid a computer defender doesn't provide anywhere near the same sort of kick.

EA obviously concedes this limitation as they've only bothered to put in one notable mode for lone players: the FIFA Street Challenge. Sound great? Don't start taking off your pants just yet. It's merely a series of matches between pre-ordained custom international teams.

Often there are additional conditions that are added into the fray, but they don't move far beyond score 'x' amount of goals in 'x' minutes. It's hardly worthy of being the title's meat and potatoes mode. Yet for single players it is.

As with all EA games there's at least an online mode. But in the context of such a simple game, committing yourself to sniffing down an online challenger you don't know is hardly worth the trouble. You're hardly going to brag to PaPpYSmeAR995 about the arse kicking you just gave him – you'll politely make your excuses and leave. Meeting up with a buddy online would be better, but in practice there's no way it'll top a room full of mates embroiled in a massive multiplayer mash.

Withstanding that it's not a game for loner kids who stutter or folk with corpse breath, *FIFA Street 3* is still one of the

best multiplayer games on the system. It supports up to seven players, it's damn fun to play, and it constantly creates a barn full of comic action. But it pays to remember that, like all simple novelties, the enjoyment here comes from beating down the mad friends next to you and not from what is, really, a simple game of jig, trick, and score. **James Ellis**

### A HEAD FOR FOOTBALL

Big ups for the look and style EA have brought to the table here. Rather than go with boring-ass photos of each of the game's 250 players they've gone and hired a professional artist to draw caricatures of them. It's brilliant and fits in with the über coolness the game obsesses itself with. We only wish they could've taken it a step further and hired a bunch of voice actors to take the piss out of the players even further. What we would've given to hear a Beckham impersonator on the court. Okay, we wouldn't have given much, but it still would've been bloody hilarious. For five seconds.



### PROS:

- The perfect casual game
- Funky, funky tunes

### CONS:

- Too simplistic
- Lack of game modes

**VERDICT:** The saviour for your multiplayer soul. Invite the lads/neighbours/parents around now!

**OFFICIAL SCORE:**  
**07**



■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** RAINBOW STUDIOS  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-12  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.mxvsatv.com

■ **BACK STORY:** If it's off-road and has two wheels or more, chances are Rainbow Studios has got it covered, although it has really dropped the ball on this one. Let's hope there's a little more mustard on the hot dog next time around.

# MX VS. ATV UNTAMED

What's the opposite of next gen?

If there's one thing we love here at OPS Towers it's a good ol' racing game. There's nothing more fun than going head-to-head with a bunch of your mates to see who's got the most juice, or taking the party online and showing the rest of the world what you've got.

You'd think that coming from such a rich pedigree *MX vs. ATV Untamed* would be a solid, dependable racer – even if Rainbow Studios just slapped a high def coat of paint on it. Unfortunately, dear readers, this is not the case. This bad boy is the exact opposite of what a great racer should be. Right off the bat you'll find it impossible to miss the jaggies. What do we mean? The jagged edges around every single thing you're looking at. Foreground, mid, background – they all abound with pixelated jagged lines,

and not the subtle curves and smooth contours we're now used to. After the orgy for your eyeballs *MotorStorm* provided as a launch title, this doesn't even come close. In fact it looks like stock standard PS2 fare.

The basic gameplay will be familiar to anyone who's played the franchise in the past. Pulling back the left thumbstick and flicking forward as you hit a ramp loads up your jumps so you can take to the skies, motocross-style, and perform tricks mid-air (and chain them together if you're quick enough). You've got a bevy of two and four-wheeled mean machines, from MX bikes to ATVs, off-road buggies to monster trucks, and, as with its predecessors, a wealth of single events and tournaments to burn through. The X-cross tournament in particular played

out like a Choose Your Own Adventure book, with many branching events to choose from on your path to victory. It all sounds fairly redeeming doesn't it? Unfortunately, it's not quite enough. What it's really lacking is intensity – those white-knuckle, heart-palpitating moments where a win determined by mere hundredths of a second leaves you pumping your fist in the air with exhilaration, or hurling the controller in defeat. Unless you're playing it on Hard you can best the competition with the briefest amount of concentration.

We hate to say it, but *MX vs. ATV Untamed* is a generic, strictly by-the-numbers effort that barely feels worthy of a next generation title. Quite a disappointment. Save some coin and stick to the old *MX vs. ATV Unleashed* on PS2. **— Dave Kozicki**

## SCHWINGGGG!!

We've gotta give kudos to the marketing department for pure, unabashed babe-a-liciousness. One sumptuous offering involved an MX and an ATV rider dismounting, slowly disrobing to reveal two 'untamed' bits of crumpet... spectacularly proportioned, bikini clad babes. If that didn't get your engine revved-up, the sudsy bike wash, over the shoulder pouts and near kiss that followed sure as hell would. What? We're guys. We dig hot chicks. *Their bottoms are touching!*



## INFO BYTE

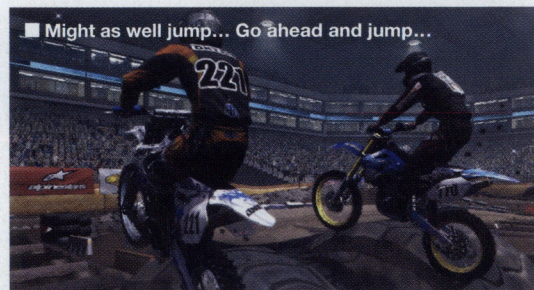
Before each event you can take your vehicle on a practise run to check out the handling and get accustomed to it.



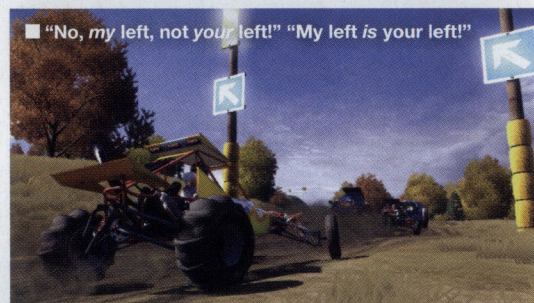
■ Hills – always making stuff difficult



■ Might as well jump... Go ahead and jump...



■ "No, my left, not your left!" "My left is your left!"



## PROS:

- It still handles well
- Did we mention the babes?

## CONS:

- Disappointing graphics
- Races lack intensity

**VERDICT:** Feels like a PS2 port, with none of the next gen goodness.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**06**



THE GODS WILL HAVE A WARRIOR

MANKIND WILL HAVE A HERO

HE WILL HAVE HIS REVENGE

# VIKING

BATTLE FOR ASGARD



A merciless army of undead soldiers sweeps through the realm of men. Every village is burned. Every person enslaved, or murdered. And when they're finished with your world, the realm of gods will also fall.

You are Skarin, a vengeful Viking warrior and all of creation's last hope. Now, to turn the tide of war, you must strive to raise your own army and drench the battlefields with the blood of your enemies.



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE



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■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** BACKBONE ENT.  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2 (AD-HOC)  
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95  
■ **HARDWARE:** WI-FI  
■ **WEB:** www.sega.com/games

■ **BACK STORY:** Backbone Entertainment has a reputation for doing small jobs well. It developed the respectable *Death, Jr.* and *Sega Genesis Collection* for PSP and has helped bring old-school games like *Mortal Kombat II* and *Joust* onto the PSN.

# SONIC RIVALS 2

Put another prickly hedgehog in your pocket

**M**otorways around the world see cars turn animals into roadkill patties every day. But this is not how things usually work in the world of Sonic the Hedgehog.

A sort of middle-finger payback, Sega's series sees hedgehogs, foxes and bats zoom through levels at eye-bleeding speeds, steamrolling metallic monstrosities. *Sonic Rivals 2* is much the same except that it ditches the platforming angle and turns each level into a one-on-one footrace.

As usual there's trouble in Sonic's bubblegum world thanks to the maniacal workings of Dr. Robotnik (otherwise known as Eggman – not that we give a rat's). The persistent twat is again after the Master Emerald leaving a band of sneaker donning animals to thwart his plans.

So yes, the story here is the usual batch of tripe. Of course that's not why anyone buys a Sonic game. Nope, they buy it for a fix of casino colours and speed – for that trademark clinging sound effect that sings when they're fired out of a canon into a farm of rings. *Sonic Rivals 2* has these elements in spades.

Most levels are, as mentioned, races between you and another character. To keep things spicy each character has their own special ability they can unleash once they've collected enough rings. Succeed in a few of these sprints and you'll encounter *Mario Bros*-esque battle games and end-of-area boss melees.

More obvious from the outset however is that Backbone Entertainment blew a stack of green on the visuals. Sega's mascots move like rocket velvet through

twists, loops, dives, and even the odd bit of in-race hang gliding.

Sound simply marvellous? Unfortunately apart from all the phantasmagorical jewels in its crown, *Sonic Rivals 2* also spotlights the silliness that has plagued the series into recent mediocrity. Notably, races consist of holding the d-pad down to the right and entering in the occasional jump command. Which is a bore.

A small remedy exists with the inclusion of the Free Play mode. Here you can take to a track solo to explore at your own pace. Unfortunately the race-orientated design of the tracks – with few hidden nooks and fewer enemies – means this mode alone can't turn this ginger beer of a title into a Crown Lager masterwork. **James Ellis**

## SHARE THE SONIC LOVE

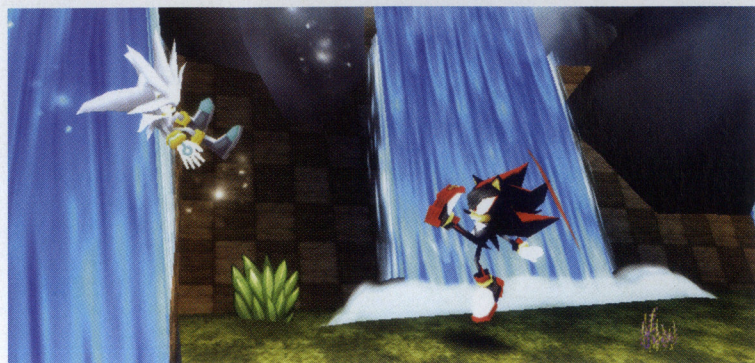
Nope, it's not worth the full shelf price, but it might be worth a bargain-bin purchase later on thanks to a robust multiplayer mode that allows two players to go at it with one disc. There are a handful of game types ripe to be fiddled with, the best being Capture the Chao (a sort of Capture the Flag game for two) and Tag. Unfortunately after successive turns they all start to mirror the main game and degrade into a one-go novelty.



### INFO BYTE

The original *Sonic Rivals* game was released exclusively for the PSP and its development was devised and supervised by members of Sonic Team USA.

■ Why does Tails have two tails? Why is Sonic blue? Why are the animals wearing sneakers? WHY WHY WHY WHY!?



■ That's it Sonic – no means yes big fella



■ Sonic – he just loves exploding into rings



### PROS:

- Fast rodent rampaging
- Multiplayer support

### CONS:

- Paris Hilton has more depth
- It's not like the Sonic of old

**VERDICT:** Blisteringly quick, with some nice extra bits and piece, but a bit too repetitive.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

**06**



*Protect the ones that protect the world.*

*"A tragic destiny born from  
the blood of the dragon..."*

# Dragooner's Aria

*Available Now*



Experience a sweeping story of  
love and adventure



Utilise an interactive Guard  
System to minimise damage!



Unlock the power of the Dragon  
Orbs to destroy the enemy!



PG

Mild violence



PlayStation Portable



# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SPORTS INTER.  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SEGA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **PRICE:** \$59.95  
■ **GAMESHARE:** N/A  
■ **WEB:** www.footballmanager.net

Overview	1st	Porto	7	5	2	0	16	4	12	17
Match Stats	2nd	Académica	8	4	2	2	10	12	-2	14
Action Zones	3rd	Boavista	7	4	1	2	9	4	5	13
Home Stats	4th	Leiria	7	4	1	2	12	9	3	13
Away Stats	5th	Vit. Guimarães	7	4	1	2	10	8	2	13
Player Ratings	6th	Benfica	7	3	2	2	12	5	7	11
Latest Scores	7th	Rio Ave	7	2	4	1	4	3	1	10



## FOOTBALL MANAGER 2008

The Special One

Okay, here's the thing: *Football Manager 2008* is aimed at soccer nerds. Point blank. So if you don't know your Ashley Coles from your Joe Coles, or your arse from your Arsenal, chances are you will hate this game more than River Plate hate Boca Juniors. And once again, if you have no idea why that metaphor makes perfect sense, do not buy this game.

However, if you read that opening paragraph, nodded your head sagely in agreement, and fancy yourself as a bit of a Jose Mourinho, then this game is a well scouted diamond in the rough. That seven out of ten score below is for you and you alone; all others should replace it

with a four or something.

Because if you hate soccer, then *Football Manager 2008* will possibly be one the most mind numbingly boring games ever devised. However, if you love soccer, and the ins and outs of the game, then you will find the insane depth of this game absolutely mindblowing.

With a wealth of options and

a detailed stats system, this is a

management sim that will become insanely addictive if you let it. On a flight, train, or bus journey with hours to kill, you'd be hard pressed to find a game that will make time move faster. Within the niche space it occupies, *Football Manager 2008* is king, just be aware that it is a very niche space. **Mark Serrels**

### PROS:

- In-depth stats
- Compulsively addictive

### CONS:

- Poor presentation
- You must love soccer

**VERDICT:** Best management sim, with depth that is unfathomable.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

07

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RPG  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** NIPPON ICHI  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95  
■ **GAMESHARE:** NO  
■ **WEB:** www.disgaeaonline.com



## DISGAEA: AFTERNOON OF DARKNESS

Pretty long bloody afternoon...

The PSP, much like Hollywood, is fond of turning to the past for a decent game rather than creating something neat from scratch. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing, mind you – especially not for strategy RPG buffs. *Disgaea* originally came out of nowhere on the PS2 in 2003, and is arguably one of the best strategy RPGs ever to grace the system. Infamous for its quirky humour and anime-inspired character design, cheeky demon kid Laharl, the son of the Netherworld's recently deceased king, wakes up after a two year nap only to find hell's gone to hell he's got to tramp through fourteen chapters of turn-based tonking to assert his power

over the place. Along the way he's beset by everything from treacherous devil-penguins to a ditzzy angel fond of asking life's big questions.

This classy 'remake' bumps up the original with a sterling two-player ad-hoc mode and a funky alternative storyline in which Laharl's back-stabbing vassal Etna manages to do away with him, casting

herself as the game's protagonist in an attempt rule the Netherworld. Worthy extras these are, and the huge flexibility to design your own characters, appeal to the demons of the Dark Assembly for favours, and romp through the Item World in a bid to upgrade your gear equals a huge amount of gameplay – and what gameplay it is. **Toby McCasker**

### PROS:

- Best strategy RPG around
- Oozes playability

### CONS:

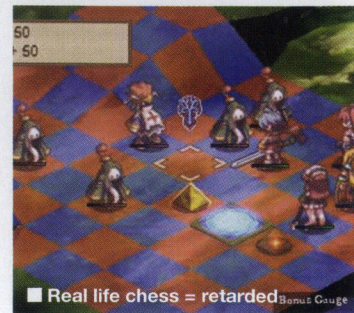
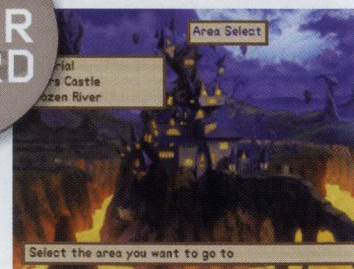
- Humour may not amuse
- Requires heaps of hours

**VERDICT:** Undeniably essential gaming for strategy RPG buffons.

■ Man, we so want to rumshie a Japanese anime character: is that so wrong? Probably...



PlayStation  
SILVER  
AWARD  
9/10



■ Real life chess = retarded

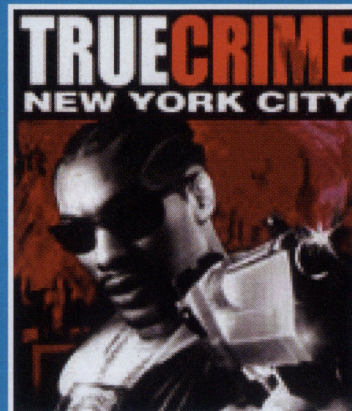


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# FILM

Family Guy takes on Star Wars in *Blue Harvest*, Kurt Russell pops the hood in *Death Proof*, Jodie Foster packs a piece in *The Brave One*, Chris Tucker returns to the screen in *Rush Hour 3* and more!



DVD OF THE MONTH

## FAMILY GUY PRESENTS BLUE HARVEST (MA15+)

**STARRING:** Seth MacFarlane, Alex Borstein, Seth Green, Mila Kunis, Drew Barrymore, Patrick Warburton, Adam West, Lori Loughlin, Johnny Brennan, Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, Phil LaMarr, Helen Reddy  
**DIRECTOR:** Dominic Polino



*Family Guy Presents Blue Harvest* is a homage to *Star Wars*, officially endorsed by LucasFilm, done in trademark *Family Guy*-style. When the power goes out while

the Griffins are watching TV, Meg suggests they tell stories to entertain themselves and asks Peter to tell the story of when she was born. Naturally, Peter insists on telling a better story, that of *Star Wars*. The rest of the episode is a retelling of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, only with the characters from *Family*

*Guy* re-imagined as iconic *Star Wars* characters. Peter, of course, bogarts perennial favourite Han Solo, Lois is the spunky Princess Leia, Chris becomes Luke Skywalker, Brian is an oddly well-spoken Chewbacca and Stewie takes on Darth Vader.

Most of the humour is spot-on, from a training video on how to the destroy the Death Star hosted by Magic Johnson, to cameos from Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo as Clark and Helen Griswold (from the *Vacation* series) who want their kids to see the plight of the Rebellion first-hand, to the token *Star Wars* poo jokes delivered expertly by Stewie

("I just sithed my pants...").

Interestingly, *Blue Harvest* shuns the usual *Family Guy* segues, opting instead for a less scattershot approach – it's actually a lot more like classic movie parodies like *Hots Shots!* or, of course, *Spaceballs*.

*Blue Harvest* is the series' first one-hour special (although on the disc, sans commercials, that translates to a bit over 40 minutes) but it's all over a little quick for the asking price.

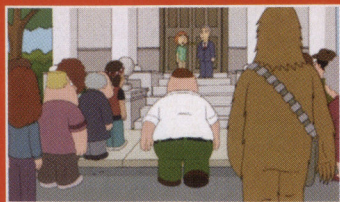
**VERDICT:** A sharp *Star Wars* spoof and typically top stuff from *Family Guy*, although we don't quite see

the merit in packaging it up and releasing it separately. It's a tad rich for our blood, paying virtually what ought to get us a season's worth of eps for a single one, although the Special Edition comes with a T-shirt, two pairs of 3D glasses, 12 trading cards (parodying the original *Star Wars* cards), a 12 page booklet with script excerpts, production notes and photos and a glut of docos, featurettes and extras on the disc itself. Here's hoping nobody pulls a sly one and 'omits' this episode from the next season release on DVD.

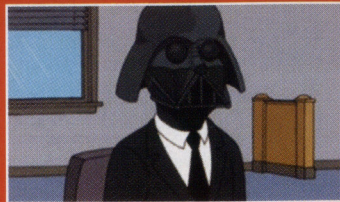
★★★★

## THE FANBOYS STRIKE BACK

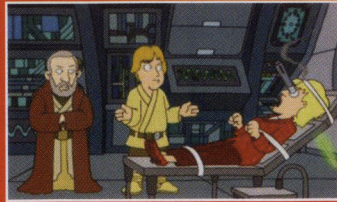
*Star Wars* has long been fodder for hilarious *Family Guy* japey, well before Seth MacFarlane devoted an entire episode to it. Here are just a few:



Peter is handed an award for bravery in a scene lifted straight from *Episode IV: A New Hope*. Chewie accompanies him on stage.



Darth Vader struggles with his boring day job and his seething hate, eventually applying for a loan in order to build the Death Star.



Luke Skywalker attempts laser eye surgery with a lightsaber after much badgering from Obi-Wan to use the Force, killing her.



For reasons we can't remember, Peter imagines himself as the slobbering Jabba the Hut. "DO WAKIE NO WAMEI NIPPLE PINCHE!"



## MARTIAL ARTS

### RUSH HOUR 3 (M)

■ **STARRING:** Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker, Hiroyuki Sanada, Philip Baker Hall, Roman Polanski, Tzi Ma, Julie Depardieu  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Brett Ratner



The third chapter of the increasingly workmanlike *Lethal Weapon/Police Story* hybrid, *Rush Hour 3* sees the wisecracking Carter and the neck-kicking Lee reteam to take on the Triad in Paris. Jackie Chan is no spring chicken anymore so the action is a bit lighter than you'd expect. The original *Rush Hour* had legs thanks to the chuckle-inducing dynamic between Chan and Tucker, but the franchise has really run out of steam. The good news? The girl they saved from being blown up in the original got hot. Like real hot, but that's really about it.

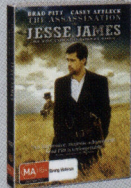
**VERDICT:** Really, you can't complain too much – it's not *glaringly* bad, and if you're watching *Rush Hour 3* you probably didn't have anything better to do anyway.

★★★

## WESTERN

### THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES BY THE COWARD ROBERT FORD (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Brad Pitt, Casey Affleck, Jeremy Renner, Sam Shepard, Sam Rockwell  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Andrew Dominik



Based on the Ron Hansen's 1983 novel of the same name, *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* is one of the best westerns since the likes of *Unforgiven* and *Tombstone*. As the outlaw Jesse James plans his next robbery he must deal with the most dangerous side-effect of his infamy, the bounty on his head attracting enemies from all over. Unfortunately, as we all know, the man who'll be his undoing comes from inside his own crew.

**VERDICT:** The movie itself is about as long as its title and it does drift a little. However, this really is a thoughtful and masterfully-crafted film. While Brad Pitt is in typically fine form it's Casey Affleck that proves his serious acting chops.

★★★★

## THRILLER

### DEATH PROOF (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Kurt Russell, Rosario Dawson, Rose McGowan, Sydney Poitier  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Quentin Tarantino



Quentin 'Pulp Fiction' Tarantino's half of the Tarantino/Rodriguez love-in *Grindhouse*, *Death Proof* is the twisted tale of a psychopathic ex-stuntman who stalks and kills his female victims from the safety of his killer, 'Death Proof' cars, a souped-up 1970 Chevy Nova and a hulking 1969 Dodge Charger. Unfortunately for him he begins hunting the wrong group of babes and sets off a high-octane, V8 duel to the death.

**VERDICT:** A wicked homage to cars, girls and '70s B-movie splatterfests, Tarantino clearly revels in the material. The longer cut feels a bit bloated but it's an entertaining ride right up to the final, white-knuckle car chase. It's no *Kill Bill* but you could do worse. Now, just hurry and make *Inglorious Bastards* already!

★★★

### RONIN (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** John Frankenheimer  
■ **STARRING:** Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Natascha McElhone, Sean Bean



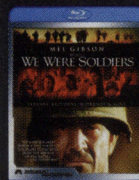
A team of elite former-spooks are assembled in France to steal a simple briefcase. *Ronin* features a car chase oft regarded as better than *Bullitt*.

**VERDICT:** One of the best thrillers of the modern era.

★★★★★

### WE WERE SOLDIERS (MA15+)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Randall Wallace  
■ **STARRING:** Mel Gibson, Greg Kinnear, Sam Elliott, Chris Klein, Barry Pepper



The true story of the first clash between US and North Vietnamese forces in Ia Drang Valley during the opening stages of the Vietnam War.

**VERDICT:** A brutal yet poignant ode to common men and uncommon valour.

★★★★

### ROBOCOP (R18+)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Paul Verhoeven  
■ **STARRING:** Peter Weller, Nancy Allen, Daniel O'Herlihy, Ronny Cox, Kurtwood Smith



An unstoppable crime-fighting cyborg takes on the criminal scum of violence-ravaged Detroit. There's nothing wrong with that sentence at all.

**VERDICT:** Classic sci-fi action and required viewing.

★★★★★

### STARSKY & HUTCH (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Russell Mulcahy  
■ **STARRING:** Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, Snoop Dogg, Vince Vaughn



Based on the 1970s TV series, Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson and a candy-apple red Gran Torino partner up to bust a big-time drug-dealer.

**VERDICT:** Good, but no *Old School*.

★★★

THE LICENSE PLATE ON STUNTMAN MIKE'S CHEVY NOVA IN *DEATH PROOF* IS JJZ-109. THIS IS THE SAME LICENSE PLATE NUMBER THAT WAS ON THE 1968 FORD MUSTANG FASTBACK THAT STEVE MCQUEEN'S CHARACTER DROVE IN *BULLITT*.

## SCI-FI

### PLANET TERROR (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Rose McGowan, Freddy Rodriguez, Josh Brolin, Rebel Rodriguez, Bruce Willis, Nicky Katt, Hung Nguyen  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Robert Rodriguez



*Planet Terror* is the other half of the ill-fated *Grindhouse* project, this contribution by Robert Rodriguez (*Desperado*, *From Dusk 'til Dawn*). When an experimental

bio-nerve gas accidentally released at a remote military base in Texas turns those exposed into flesh-eating, mutating, killer zombies a ragtag crew of local townspeople must join forces to survive the onslaught, and just maybe save the world.

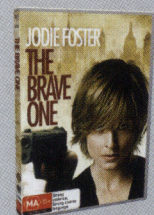
**VERDICT:** Not quite as good as *Death Proof*, but still outrageously silly, sexy and spirited, *Planet Terror* probably won't find too many fans outside of real film buffs on account of Joe Public not understanding the entire point of the film in the first place.

★★★

## DRAMA

### THE BRAVE ONE (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Jodie Foster, Terrence Howard, Naveen Andrews  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Neil Jordan



How many wrongs make a right? Two usually, or that's what we've always thought anyway. When radio host Erica Bain and her fiancé, David, are attacked by three thugs while walking their dog her life goes off the rails. David dies from his injuries but Erica survives – and she's a changed woman. She acquires herself a gun and begins to dispense her own vigilante justice, killing criminals and attempting to track down the scumbags who killed David.

**VERDICT:** There's a little more to *The Brave One* than some critics are prepared to give it credit for, and we definitely think criticism of its admittedly problematic morals is unwarranted. It's a revenge movie, bad guys die, and it ticks most of the right boxes.

★★★

## TV

### THE ADVENTURES OF YOUNG INDIANA JONES - VOLUME 1 (PG)

■ **STARRING:** Sean Patrick Flanery, Corey Carrier, George Hall, Ronny Coutteure  
■ **CREATOR:** George Lucas



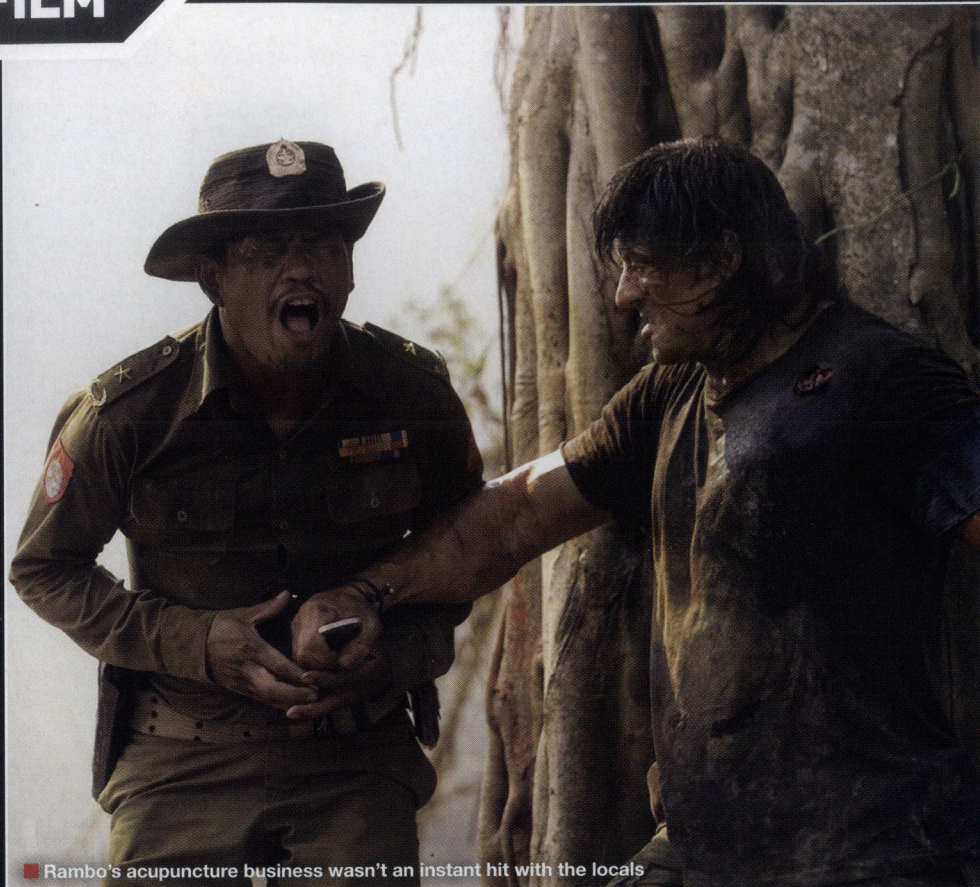
Edutainment. It generally sucks. Not, however, when it comes to *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones*. Many of you should be old enough to remember this

show from when it aired back in 1992. Each episode is a flashback into the past adventures of Indy when he was a child and a young man. Volume 1 also contains an absurd array of special features, most of historical interest. Watch *Indiana Jones*, learn stuff. Cool.

**VERDICT:** From 1992 to 1994, the series was nominated for 23 Emmy Awards and won 10, and it's not too hard to see why. Being set nearly entirely in the past means it hasn't aged particularly badly either.

★★★★★





■ Rambo's acupuncture business wasn't an instant hit with the locals

CINEMA

# RAMBO (RATING TBC)

■ **Director:** Sylvester Stallone  
■ **Starring:** Sylvester Stallone

**C**learly determined to resurrect everything that made him popular in the first place, Sly Stallone brings the grizzled Vietnam vet John Rambo back to the big screen for another (and possibly not his last) tour of duty. On the Thai-Burma border the world's longest-running civil war rages into its 60th year, but Rambo, still living in the area, has long given up fighting. However, that all changes when a group of human rights missionaries go missing, held captive by the Burmese army. You can fill in the blanks, but rest assured, for Rambo, killin' is as easy as breathing. It's already opened in the states, and reports are mixed. One thing that is clear, though, is that Rambo holds the record with the most kills out of the entire Rambo series with 236 kills (that's a whopping average of 2.59 kills per minute). Sweet deal. On the back of the surprisingly good *Rocky Balboa* and on account of the massive amount of action the trailer promises we'll stay the jokes about ol' Sly's age for the time being – in fact, we'll admit we're rather looking forward to this. It'll probably be total rubbish, but good rubbish. If you know what we mean. Opens February 21



■ Rambo renders another goon 'armless

## COMING SOON

### 10,000 BC (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Steven Strait  
As a member of a primitive tribe during the dawn of man, 21-year-old mammoth hunter D'Leh travels through unknown lands on a quest to rescue his people from extinction. Opens March 6

### MR. WOODCOCK (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Seann William Scott  
A self-help author who returns to his hometown discovers his mother has fallen in love with his old high school gym teacher and nemesis, Mr. Woodcock. Opens March 13

### DRILLBIT TAYLOR (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Owen Wilson  
When three high school freshmen who are singled out by a bully on the first day of class they hire Drillbit Taylor (Owen Wilson) to protect them. Opens March 20

### SEMI PRO (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Will Ferrell  
A typically wacky Will Ferrell comedy set in 1976 against the backdrop of the maverick ABA – a fast-paced basketball league that rivalled the NBA. Opens April 3

# BUZZ

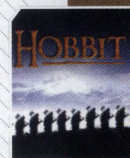
The latest movie murmurs from home and abroad



### GO JOE!

Dennis Quaid (*The Day After Tomorrow*) and Channing Tatum (*A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints*) have signed on for the lead roles

in Steven Sommers' upcoming action flick adaptation, *G.I. Joe*. The report by *Variety* states Quaid will play General Hawk and Tatum will play Duke Hauser. They'll join a burgeoning cast featuring Marlon Wayans, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Sienna Miller, Arnold Vosloo and others. The film isn't due out until 2009.



### SHORT ROUND

If rumours are to be believed, Guillermo del Toro (*Hellboy*, *Pan's Labyrinth*) may be handed the reigns for the upcoming prequel to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Hobbit*. It's being split over two movies that'll be filmed back-to-back. No writer has been hired yet due to the writer's strike, but shooting is tentatively set to commence in 2009, with the first film to hit in 2010 and the second in 2011.



### BONDAGE

The title for the 22nd James Bond picture and follow-up to the smashing *Casino Royale* is... *Quantum of Solace*, which is admittedly a bit naff (we're not even remotely sure what it means). That said, the title stems from a short story that Bond creator Ian Fleming published in 1960, so we'll get over it. Two new Bond girls have been unveiled – Ukrainian vixen Olga Kurylenko (*Hitman*) and Gemma Arterton (from Guy Ritchie's upcoming *RocknRolla*). It's also been revealed that this instalment will feature twice the action of the last one. *Quantum of Solace* is scheduled to release this November.



### WASHED UP

It's being reported that *Spawn* director Mark Nippee has signed on to direct the action comedy *Van Damme vs. Seagal*, a comedy about the two washed-up action stars, and bitter rivals (apparently), joining forces to thwart a nuclear threat that may just destroy the entire planet. Don't get your hopes up too high – there's little to no chance the two action icons will appear as themselves in the film. Shame that.



# FILM

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# THE ULTIMATE COUNTDOWN AS VOTED BY YOU!





The latest and greatest gadgets

# TECH

## EARPHONE HOME

The "special" home where top-notch lug-pluggers for music lovers who like discreet style with their favoured tunes are cared for and cherished



### SONY MDR-EX90LP

**\$199**

[www.sony.com.au](http://www.sony.com.au)

**JUST A FEW** years ago, in-earphones sounded like a mosquito in a paper lampshade and wouldn't stay in your ears if you so much as breathed heavily. Today, these Sonys rip out clean, detailed sound with tons of bass, can be jogged in during an earthquake without moving, and look great too. That's progress.

**LOVE** Great all-round sound with plenty o' bass. Comfortable and secure fit. Groovy looks.

**HATE** Don't go up super-loud. Neither block out noise nor keep music in as well as some.



### PHILIPS SHE9700

**\$100**

[www.philips.com.au](http://www.philips.com.au)

**SHOP AROUND ONLINE** and you can get these for as little as \$45. You can barely buy a bottle of wine in Sydney for that these days. Sounding tight and staying in place even in our horribly misshapen ears, these are cracking budget earphones. They can't match the others for sound quality, but they're by no means poor, and you don't have to be by any means rich to afford them.

**LOVE** Cheap. Sound perfectly passable.

**HATE** Pseudo-leatherette-style carry case.



### CREATIVE AURVANA

**\$130**

[au.creative.com](http://au.creative.com)

**THERE REALLY IS** an embarrassment of riches on offer in this test, but something has to come bottom, and it's these. They cost less than the Bose and Sony earphones, but don't match their aural ammunition either. Plus, that white paint-job leaves them looking horribly 2005-esque. That won't do.

**LOVE** Another good-sounding, well-fitting pair of in-earphones.

**HATE** Not as splendid as the Bose or Sony efforts. Plasticky whiteness.







# GET THE HOTTEST GEAR EACH MONTH IN **T3**





Codes, hints, tips, unlockables and more!

# CHEATS

Get the winning edge  
with *OPS*' tricky cheats

## PS3

### FOLKLORE

#### Unlockable Special Folks

These are extra folks obtained through achievements through the Dungeon Trial Mode.

#### Ellen – Collbrande

Score 150,000 Campaign Points in Dungeon Trial Mode

#### Ellen – Duergar

Score 30,000 Campaign Points in Dungeon Trial Mode

#### Ellen – Kaladbolg

Upload a 4,500 Point Dungeon

#### Keats – Alphard

Upload a 4,500 Point Dungeon

#### Keats – Collbrande

Score 150,000 Campaign Points in Dungeon Trial Mode

#### Keats – Duergar

Score 30,000 Campaign Points in Dungeon Trial Mode

#### Keats – Valiant

Score 100,000 Campaign Points in Dungeon Trial Mode



## PS2

### RESIDENT EVIL 4

#### Alternate Title Screen

Complete the main game once.

#### Ashley's knight armor outfit

Beat Seperate Ways

#### Chicago Typewriter (Main Game)

Beat Seperate Ways

#### Chicago Typewriter (Seperate Ways)

Beat Assignment Ada

#### Handcannon

Have each mercenary get a five star rating on all of the stages

#### Infinite Rocket Launcher

Beat the game once

#### Leon's gangster outfit

Beat Seperate Ways

#### Matilda

Beat the game once

#### Mercenaries

Beat the main game once

#### Movie Browser

Beat the game

#### P.R.L 412

Beat Professional Mode

#### Professional Difficulty

Beat the main game once

#### Seperate Ways (Ada's Bonus Game)

Beat the main game once

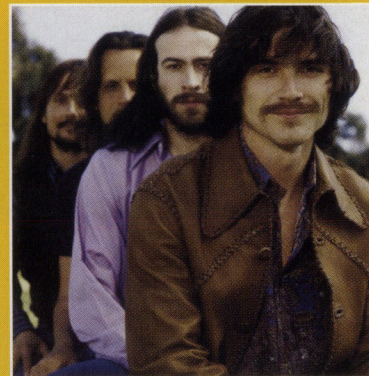
#### Seperate ways movie browser

Beat seperate ways once

## CHEAT OF THE MONTH

### Rock Band

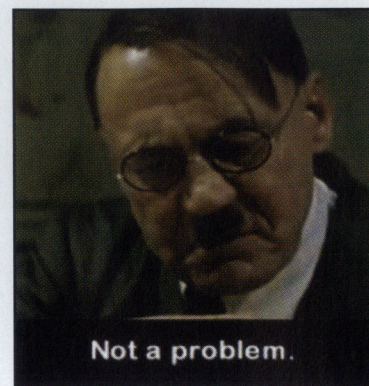
"I am a Golden God" said guitarist from *Almost Famous* fictional band Stillwater, in the midst of drug induced haze. Now you can do the same (minus the drugs, hopefully) whilst wielding GOLDEN instruments. If you beat the solo tour on any instrument, on normal or above then you receive an all new GOLDEN version of said instrument of ROCK! That's right GOLDEN!



## WTF?

### HD DVD Admits Defeat

While admittedly not attached to any specific game, this is still well worth a gander, as it relates specifically to the high def format war and, in particular, to the fact that Blu-ray is a bee's dick away from declaring outright victory. Something that Hitler, in this bizarre mesh of scenes from the film *Downfall* with 'tweaked' subtitles is all too painfully aware of...



## PSP

### RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS

#### Unlockable Cheats

To unlock these cheats for use in the game, you need to get skill points by doing various tasks throughout the game. Once you have enough, you will be able to turn on/off the cheat whenever you want.

**Big Headed Clank**  
03

**Big Headed Enemies**  
14

**Big Headed Giant Clank**  
01

**Big Headed Ratchet**  
05

**Bolt Confusion**  
20

**Climb The Treehouse**  
25

**Hardcore Mode**  
24

**Mirrored Levels**  
10

**Mooo!**  
24

**More Cowbell**  
08

**Old Timey**  
24

**She's On Fire!**  
07

**Super Bloom**  
12



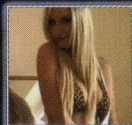
# BLING!

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## HOTTEST MOVIES



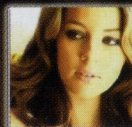
PS78753



PS77238



PS77245



PS75973



PS76219



PS75932



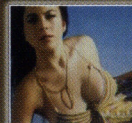
Sophie's hot vid  
PS75931



PS77268



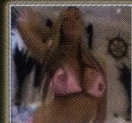
PS76522



PS78904



PS78901



PS77308



PE75968



PE75964



PE75941

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| PS77266 Krystal schoolgirl | PS75950 Tasty Natasha        |
| PS70295 Perfect Rear       | PS76239 HOT Horny Blonde     |
| PS77328 Thelma in Pink     | PS77256 Bikini Girl in Bed   |
| PS77267 Cheerleader        | PS75969 Sexy secretary       |
| PS70354 Pleasure           | PS77329 Exotic Lingerie Girl |

**Sophie Howard**

Sophie Video

Sophie Wallpaper

PS75931

PS59345

More Sophie Wallpapers

PS59513

PS59514

PS59344

**Emily Scott**

Emily Scott Wallpaper

PS60306

Emily Scott Mobile Screensaver

PS78039

**Jessica Alba**

Alba Wallpaper

PS57977

Alba Video

PS78713

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## FILTHY PICS



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PS61388



PS59208



PS58336



PS60335



PS57923



PS56933



PS58032



PS58169



PS61177



PS59499



PS59360



PS60898



PS56413



PS60858

## ANIMATIONS



PS70922



PS70782



PS70887



PS70911



PS70828



PS70323

## MOBILE JAVA GAMES



PT85943



PT86081



PT85198



PT86082



PT86078



PT85904



PT86082



PT85926



PT85906



PT86077



PT85818



PT86053



PT85119



PT85929



PT86074



PT85679



PT86017



PT85741



PT86065



PT86073

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# DATABASE

All the games  
that matter  
on PS3!

## FUTURE WATCH

The PS3 games to grab in the coming months

### GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

**Release:** 29 April 2008

The year's Big Kahuna finally has a concrete release date. You're unlikely to need much convincing but just in case here's the latest reasons why you need it. Calling in AI friends via your mobile to help you during missions, grabbing onto and climbing along moving vehicles and blind-firing rocket launchers!

### KILLZONE 2

**Release:** 2008

Yes, we realise that the cheeky buggers at Sony haven't shown us anything new on the game since E3 in July 2007 but considering how insanely well it lived up to the monstrous hype set by its infamous 2005 trailer, we're still very confident that this will be a serious contender for 'best FPS yet' bragging rights.

### MERCENARIES 2: WORLD IN FLAMES

**Release:** Early 2008

New info on this one has also been quiet for a few months but with its original release date being November 2007 we feel it can't be too far off.

Its open-world playing field, where you can utterly destroy everything in sight (buildings, vehicles, bridges and even trees) has us more than a little excited.

### INDIANA JONES

**Release:** 2008

A recent peak at some new levels in *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* (which is based around the same cutting-edge destruction and animation tech) has had us dreaming about LucasArts' upcoming Indiana Jones epic. Expect it to coincide with the release of the not-so-catchily titled *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*.

## PS3 TOP 20

1



### ASSASSIN'S CREED

A landmark in gaming history. Nothing short of awe-inspiring. The missions are samey, but navigating open-worlds will never be the same. The biggest leap since *GTAIII*.

2



### UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

The best PlayStation exclusive on the market and the best looking console game to date. Frankly, *Uncharted* rocks up to the party and just plain owns everything...

3



### CALL OF DUTY 4

Relentlessly exciting. Includes a dizzying variety of combat scenarios and stacks of bleeding-edge military hardware. You'd have to be insane, or a girly-man, to miss it.

4



### MOTORSTORM

Fast, hard, dirty and utterly exhilarating, *MotorStorm* is essential for everyone's PS3. Not even the lack of split-screen can detract from this fantastic racer.

5



### RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

The perfect launch title for PS3, and possibly the best console FPS ever made. The massive 40-player online deathmatches are more fun than you can imagine.

6



### THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

One of the deepest adventures we've ever laid eyes on. Simply put – awesome. This is arguably the only RPG you'll need for some time to come.

7



### SKATE

A groundbreaking title that resets the bar for sports games in general. It kickflips *Tony Hawk's* to the curb with its simple approach. Irresistibly addictive and downright essential.

8



### WARHAWK

There is no better multiplayer game on PS3 right now. Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night and smoother than a glass of Guinness, it's a superior piece of software.

9



### HEAVENLY SWORD

*Heavenly Sword* is one of the best games we've seen in ages. A beautiful, yet deep, masterpiece and an awesomely enjoyable ride, albeit a rather short one.

10



### GUITAR HERO III

Captures everything perfect about *Guitar Hero* with the best tracklist yet, but very nearly spoiled it all with the ridiculous new Battle Mode.

11



### COLIN McRAE DIRT

*Colin McRae DIRT* is an ambitious, accessible racer with a surprising amount of depth. The best rally sim ever? You better believe it. Rest in peace big guy.

12



### THE DARKNESS

Tentacles and guns – the perfect combination. Stunning, original and gory as hell. You'd have to be dim to miss *The Darkness*.

13



### STUNTMAN: IGNITION

The vehicular equivalent of a 10-hour-long orgasm. Gentlemen, start your boners. *Stuntman: Ignition* succeeds in upending the original in every way.

14



### RATCHET & CLANK FUTURE: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

The biggest, wildest, most interesting, varied and downright gool ol' fashioned fun adventure these two have been part of.

15



### THE ORANGE BOX

A stellar package; ripe, in season and packed full of vitamin value. If there isn't one title here that does it for your gaming license is null and void.

16



### TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

This Vegas adventure is definitely worth a look. A slick, gorgeous, accessible and utterly entertaining tactical shooter.

17



### THE CLUB

Who cares if *Resident Evil 4*'s *Mercenaries* mode did it first – Sega's game reinvents the genre. Original, compulsive and fun – this is one club we recommend you join.

18



### NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA

*Ninja Gaiden Sigma* is a treasure trove of gaming goodness. Dig it up now. It's tougher than a coffin nail. Not even Chuck Norris can beat this sucker.

19



### FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Still one of the best two-player games around, with visuals that will knock the wind (and most of the teeth) out of you. Great online too.

20



### SINGSTAR

The first real series evolution, *SingStar* will rule Friday nights for the foreseeable future. With downloadable tracks it's truly a game that'll last as long as the PS3 does.



# PS3

## ARMORED CORE 4

7

A far better alternative to *Mobile Suit Gundam*.

## BEOWULF

6

Has the dubious honour of ticking every game cliché.

## BLADESTORM: THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

6

A solid mix of genres wrapped in an intriguing tale.

## BLAZING ANGELS II: SECRET MISSIONS OF WWII

6

Not quite the ace of aces at this stage.

## CALL OF DUTY 3

7

A solid but surprisingly unspectacular shooter.

## CLIVE BARKER'S JERICHO

6

Sick and twisted but not enough variety.

## CONAN

7

A bulldog of bloodletting, savage adventure and boobies.

## DEVIL MAY CRY 4

7

A worthy entry into the series but the backtracking spoils it.

## DEF JAM: ICON

8

Somehow it's won its way into our hearts. Stupid fun.

## ENCHANTED ARMS

8

The first proper Japanese RPG for the PS3 – quirky.

## THE EYE OF JUDGEMENT

5

Impressive tech, but it's still a \$160 card game.

## FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

7

Slick and fun, if only it was about EIGHT TIMES LONGER.

## F.E.A.R.

8

A chilling ride but the graphics are a bit of a shocker.

## FIFA 08

8

Finally puts *FIFA* on level terms with *Pro Evolution*.

## FOLKLORE

8

Great graphics, memorable characters. A sweet surprise.

## FORMULA ONE CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

9

Looks great and plays great. F1 fans, you've been called.

## FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

7

Brims with potential but fails to live up to it.

## GENJI: DAYS OF THE BLADE

5

Plodding gameplay that belongs on the Atari 2600.

## THE GODFATHER: THE DON'S EDITION

6

Fine, but do yourself a favour and get the PS2 version.

## THE GOLDEN COMPASS

4

Uninspired level design and dull quests make this a chore.

## HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

6

Decent, but its chore-like structure will bore most.

## JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS

7

A top bit of racing fluff, although it's all a tad generic.

## KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN

6

One part *Hitman*, one part Michael Mann; mostly a let down.

## LAIR

5

A massive let-down. It feels rushed and unfinished.

## MADDEN NFL 08

7

Some great improvements and plenty of modes.



## CALL OF DUTY 4

The PS3 had a ridiculously good year for first-person shooters in 2007 so it's no small feat that *COD4* shot down all competitors in a blaze of glory.



## RESISTANCE

Despite being a launch title, Insomniac's shooter packs such robust single-player and multiplayer modes that it's a true classic.



## THE ORANGE BOX

Its meat and potatoes may be the three year-old *Half-Life 2* but with four bonus games added in it's one hell of a compelling package.



## THE DARKNESS

If stylish graphics, killer gunplay, AND the ability to tear out enemies' hearts with giant tentacles doesn't appeal you're just weird.



## RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

Viva Las Vegas, baby. The *R6* series received one of the best makeovers in the business with this superb sequel.

## MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

9

Great co-op and an exhaustive list of Marvel's greatest.

## MEDAL OF HONOR AIRBORNE

6

A dinosaur of an FPS – wait for *Brothers in Arms* instead.

## MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT

3

A rubber godzilla of a title. What a pipe blocker!

## NBA 08

5

Fails to pick a side (sim or arcade) and so fails at both.

## NBA 2K8

8

Not as pretty as *LIVE* but has more depth.

## NBA LIVE 08

8

Best of its kind. B-ball devotees will adore it, guaranteed.

## NBA STREET HOMECOURT

8

The brashest, most addictive arcade basketball game yet.

## NEED FOR SPEED CARBON

8

The last *NFS* street racer before the series went legit.

## NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET

8

Great smoke, but more depth would've been nice.

## NHL 2K7

8

A snappy, good looking hockey game.

## PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

6

A very shallow slash 'em up. Ye be warned.

## PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008

8

Still the best soccer in the biz, but the graphics are dire.

## RATATOUILLE

4

As forgettable as the last animated-movie-cum-game.

## RIDGE RACER 7

9

Sexy, gravity defying – like Jessica Alba bungee jumping.

## SEGA RALLY

7

Not so much a revolution as one hell of a renovation.

## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

4

Mostly terrible. Avoid at all costs.

## STRANGLEHOLD

7

*Max Payne* inspired action, plenty of frantic fun.

## TIMESHIFT

6

A solid time-bender that doesn't quite reach 88mph.

## TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: AW2

8

A tense, realistic shooter, but *Rainbow Six Vegas* is better.

## TONY HAWK'S PROVING GROUND

6

Struggles to escape the shadow of *SKATE*.

## TUROK

7

Packs plenty of bite but it's missing a few teeth.

## UNTOLD LEGENDS: DARK KINGDOM

5

Stick to *Oblivion* – no ballads will be sung of this.

## VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

8

As hardcore as fighting games get.

## VIRTUA TENNIS 3

8

Some of the best fun four people can have on one PS3.

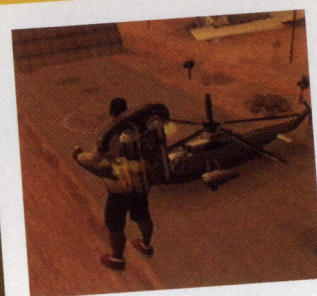
## WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008

7

A solid entry. A few new additions but still plays the same.

# MAGIC MOMENTS

Great moments in PlayStation history remembered!



**THE GAME:** Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas  
**THE CONSOLE:** PlayStation 2  
**THE YEAR:** 2004

**THE MOMENT:** In a game positively overflowing with surprises and magic moments (throw them all up on a TV *Star Wars* intro-style and you'd be watching the list scroll by for hours) there's one moment in *San Andreas* that we remember vividly, standing out as the single most defining moment of pure joy in the entire game.

Indulge us, if you will, as we set the background for the moment in question. It was October 6 2004... in the morning... we think. Our resident *GTA* nut Naz was reviewing the game for *OPS2* and he'd just broken out into the countryside and was standing on top of a mountain staring out over the kilometres of forest rolling off into the distance. Huge expanses like these may be relatively common today thanks to open-world games like *Oblivion*, *Far Cry 2* and *Just Cause* but in 2004 sights like these were truly jaw-dropping.

Naz was reviewing *San Andreas* in the company of a local Rockstar representative (when a game costs \$200 million to make you don't tend to let copies of it out of your sight a month before release) and he mentioned to the rep, "Imagine how unreal it'd be if you had a jetpack to fly around with." "I guess", said the rep with a blank-faced shrug (knowing full well that players would unlock a jetpack a few hours further into the game). Word to the wise, never play poker with anyone from Rockstar.

After a build up like that you can imagine the reaction Naz had when, after fighting his way through a top-secret Area 51-esque military base, he saw a prototype jetpack sitting inside a missile silo, just begging to be flown out. "No way! No way!!!", may have been some of exclamations shouted during his child-like joy. Don't even get us started on how Naz reacted when he found out you could fire an Uzi at foes while flying the jetpack with the other. To think, in a few months we'll be able to discover the magic all over again as we unlock all of *GTAIV*'s secrets. Anyone got a time machine?





NEXT

# grand theft auto IV

Okay... so Rockstar teased us with a preview this month (admittedly an amazing one) but it assures us we'll get hands-on next month. Check back for the exclusive!



- *Race Driver: GRID* exclusive interview!
- Hands on with *Brothers in Arms*!
- World exclusive preview on new *Aliens* game!

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\*Contents subject to change.





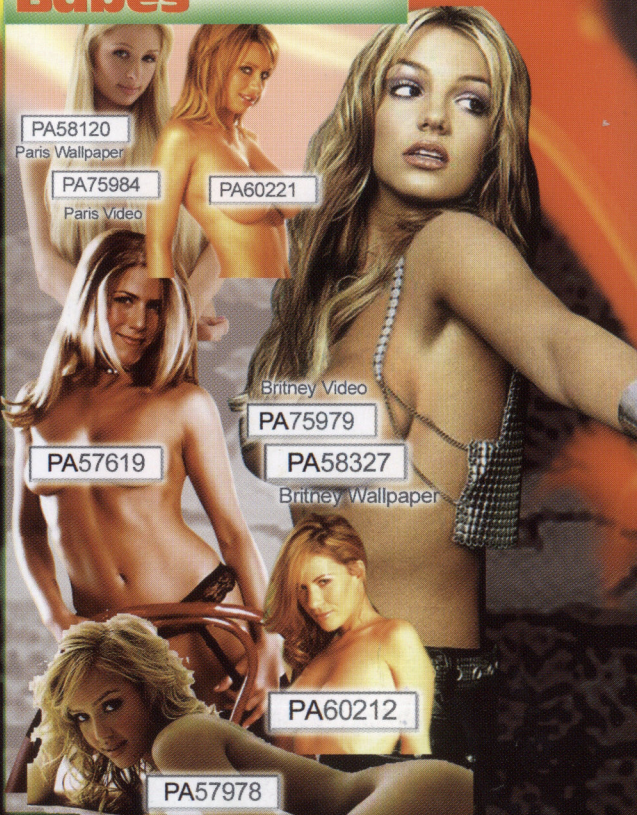
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RING TONES	FULL LENGTH	ARTIST / TITLE
PA43994	PA47069	Timbaland feat Republic - Apologize
PA44052	PA47086	Leona Lewis - Bleeding Love
PA44336	PA47102	The Veronicas - Untouched
PA43996	PA47102	Alicia Keys - No One
PA44084	PA47100	Santana feat. Chad Kroeger - Into The Night
PA44226	---	The Pottellez - Dont Hold Back
PA43539	PA46994	Timbaland feat. Keri Hilson - The Way I Are
PA44116	PA47146	Maroon 5 - Won't Go Home Without You
PA43988	PA47095	Mika - Happy Ending
PA44111	PA47151	Fergie - Clumsy
PA44118	PA47107	Sean Kingston - Me Love
PA43960	PA47088	Matchbox Twenty - How Far Weve Come
PA44122	PA47111	Avril Lavigne - Hot
PA44055	PA47109	Rihanna feat. NeYo - Hate That I Love You
PA44053	PA47087	Chris Brown - Kiss Kiss
PA46981	PA46981	Plain White T's - Hey There Delilah
PA44124	---	Linkin Park - Shadow Of The Day
PA44062	---	The Veronicas - Hook Me Up
PA44056	PA47091	I Can't Vs F.I. Grand - LEME THINK ABOUT
PA43997	PA47083	Kanye West - Good Life
PA43590	PA47036	Sean Kingston - Beautiful Girls

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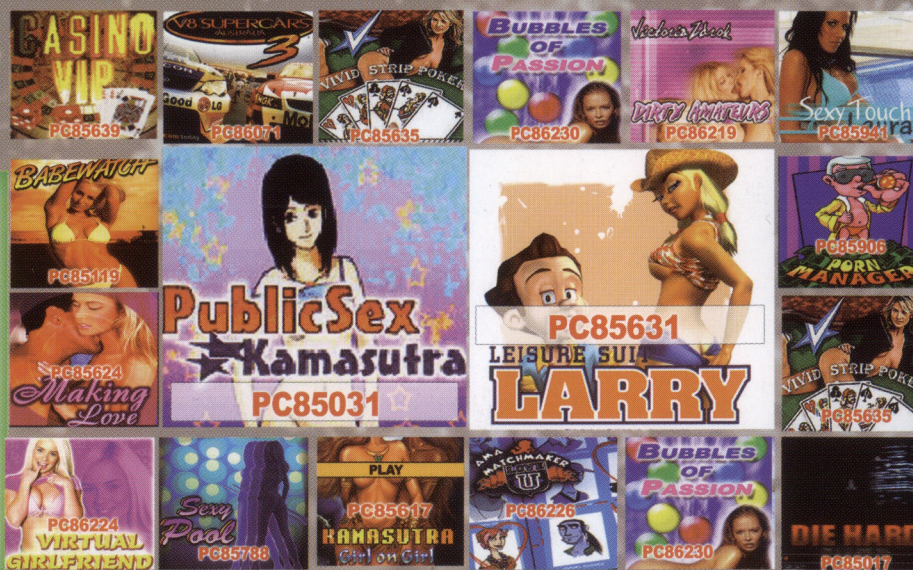
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## Fantasy Vids



## Mobile Java Games

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